

HIS FOLKS.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

"His folks are coming over to spend the day, and 'tend the conference meetin' to-morrow, Lisabeth, and I don't see how I can spare you. There's bakin', and starchin', and ironin' to do, besides scaldin' the preserves, sweepin' out the spare chamber, and finishin' my new lawn dress." And Aunt Huldah leaned on her broom handle, and sighed dolefully.

"I wish his folks were all in the bottom of the Red Sea," I ejaculated, benevolently. They were always turning up if I wanted to go anywhere, and always came to dinner when there was nothin' to eat in the house, and things were all upside down, and O, what a disagreeable set they were—so gossipy and old-fashioned, and so full of advice.

"I think your temper would have improved, if you'd a gone more to prayer-meetin', and less to spellin' schools last winter," observed Aunt Huldah, regarding me with disapproval. "There aint any better folks in Christendom, than *his* folks, only Mary is dreadful particular, and Jane thinks too much of dress, and Nathan is close, and Liza aint any kind of a cook, though she turns up her nose at other people's victuals."

I laughed in spite of myself. He is Aunt Huldah's husband, she never called him anything else, and *his* folks are as numerous as the sands of the seashore. Aunt Huldah wasn't very fond of them, in spite of what she said, for they were very stuck up, always looking into things, and she suspected that they didn't think her a very fine house-keeper.

"I shall go, if it isn't until dark," I said to myself, attacking the front room carpet with my energetic broom.

"The Mapleton minister, and Deacon Perkins and his wife are coming to tea, too, and there's an awful sight of work to be done between now and to-morrow night. Then his folks have got company from Freeport, and I s'pose they'll bring them over."

I thought of the picnic, and my heart sank fearfully. There was my new pink dress that I hurried so to finish for the occasion, and my pretty broad hat, that looked as rustic as the wild roses, which Aunt

Lucy brought me from Boston. I never wanted to see them again if I couldn't wear them at that particular time, and wasn't it the most heart-breaking thing imaginable that his folks should take a fancy to come over just then and spoil everything! The conference meeting was at the lower corner, two miles from our house, and Mrs. Deacon How, who was a cousin of the family, lived the next door to the church. Why didn't they go there? I had an especial reason for wishing to go to this picnic. There had been a stranger in town for a few days—a handsome young man with whom I had been having quite a flirtation, not that I had ever been introduced to him, but I had seen him at church, and his attention seemed to be particularly drawn towards the choir where I sang soprano. Once, he half smiled in my face, and I know I must have looked very conscious, for I could hardly keep from smiling myself. Then I met him in Poplar Lane, and he asked me the way to Green Hill. I told him the way as clearly as I knew how, but somehow he didn't understand me, and we had quite a long conversation before he seemed to have any idea what direction to take. Then we felt sufficiently acquainted to make a little conversation on other subjects, or at least he did, of course I wasn't so forward as to commence it. He was an artist, and was making such lovely sketches of our meadows and hills, and the graceful curves of the river. He had a portfolio full of them with him, and was kind enough to show them to me. I hadn't any idea how delightful Stillwater scenery was until then, though I had lived there since I was a little girl. Then he asked me if I was going to the picnic, and when I said I *was* going, he said that he should be sure to go also, though he hadn't decided to do so before. So I had been thinking of it all the week (he had such nice eyes and such nice manners, so different from our Stillwater young men), and as it happened my new pink dress was just the thing to wear, and my hat was more becoming than anything I ever had on my head.

"I can't have any bakin' done in the

house to-day, Lisabeth," said Aunt Huldah as I prepared to heat the oven, "it is too late, and a bakin' fire will heat up the house dreadfully. You know I never allow any bakin' or ironin' done after morning in summer, we can do them both at the same time to-morrow."

I slammed the door, and went up stairs into my own room to indulge in a good crying fit. Was there ever anybody so unkind, or so inconsiderate as Aunt Huldah? She knows that I had set my heart on going to the picnic, and still wouldn't have the baking or ironing done to-day instead of to-morrow, only because the house would be heated up a little more. I was thankful that she wasn't my own aunt, though I hadn't a living relation in the world that I knew of. She adopted me when I was a five year old girl just after my mother died. I was bidden to call her mamma then, but refused to do so, and after weeks of vain effort to conquer me in this respect, I was allowed to call her aunt, which title I much preferred for the cold stern-faced woman. I was eighteen now, and all these years I had lived under her roof, *her* roof I say. Uncle John was only *he*, and dared not even call his soul his own. Aunt Huldah managed his farm, the bank and railroad stock, Sam the hired man, Uncle John and me, and looked after the minister, the parish, the school-district, and the neighbors, but someway she failed when she attempted to manage *his* folks. They were a match for her, every one of them. Indeed, she was quite weak in the presence of Aunt Julia, and dared not contradict Aunt Jane when she declared that our minister's sermons weren't worth listening to, and that he was the ugliest as well as the stupidest man she ever saw. Our minister, that she looked after with such a vengeance, examining him to find out whether his views were right, and setting the domestic affairs in order, until they had the washing done regularly Mondays, and she was satisfied that they used Perkins's soap! Uncle John was the kindest little man in the world, himself, but for some reason I had always disliked his folks. They had always treated me very well, and I think they pitied me, I was so alone in the world, and so completely at the mercy of Aunt Huldah. Sometimes they asked me to come and visit them for a week or so, but Aunt Huldah would never allow me to accept their invitations, saying that

they only asked me because they had some extra work on hand, and wanted help, that Jane wanted her bonnet trimmed over, or that Lucy wanted to get a seamstress for nothing instead of hiring one. Aunt Lucy had made me several little presents, and was really very kind, but she had fine relations, or at least her husband had; and one of her sisters had married a man as rich as a prince, and she was always talking about these fine people, until one grew bewildered, and the sound of their names was mixed confusedly with one's dreams. They all had a tiresome habit of asking questions, and were forever coming over to tea, and keeping me home from the singing school and choir meetings. But then they cheered up Uncle John, who was often downcast, and I suppose I ought to have been glad to see them. But for all that I was not, and *his* folks were almost as much of a bugbear to me as to Aunt Huldah.

I wickedly hoped that to-morrow would be rainy so that everybody might be disappointed as well as I, and the picnic would be postponed and I could go, after all. But it didn't rain; it was as bright a day as ever dawned, the laves glistened in the sunshine, the sky was one great arch of cloudless blue, the river looked like a golden ribbon twined round the hills, and the daisies and buttercups danced merrily in the wind. Aunt Huldah called me early in the morning. The great brick oven was already roaring, and the irons were in the fire.

"I reckon we shall have to work pretty spry till after dinner," said she, making a great clatter with the breakfast dishes.

"But Lizzie wants to go to the picnic," said Uncle John, daringly.

"Well, I can't help it if she does. Don't. I want to go to the conference meeting, though I aint Orthodox but born and eddicated a Methodist? I never could get time to go to such places. I know 'twould do me good if I could go, for my hope aint been very strong of late. But I don't 'prove of people's wasting their time to go to picnics, An evening entertainment is well enough now and then in the time of year when there's little work to do, but it's scandalous for one to spend a good bright summer day like this doing nothing."

"All the other girls are going, and it seems rather hard," returned Uncle John. He never would have said so much on his own account.

"Well, I don't care if all the other girls are going, Lisabeth can't go one step till her work's done. After that I don't care what becomes of her. It's pretty well for you to be wantin' me left without help, and all your folks in a heap a goin' to be saddled on me to-day. I've done enough hard work gettin' meals for them before to-day, and you no more handy than a stick about the house!"

I bit my lips to keep from speaking while I laid the table for breakfast. Uncle John heaved a sigh and went out to help Sam finish the milking.

Ten o'clock came, and the picnic party started for the woods. Sally Lane, my particular friend who lived just under the hill, came for me to go with her. I said calmly that I couldn't go, but my eyes were full of tears—I couldn't keep them back to save my life; and when I saw them setting out so merrily over the fields, I thought I could not endure my fate, anyway. I was only eighteen, you know, and a little thing like that is such a great grief to a girl of that age.

"Seems to me you don't work with much will," observed Aunt Huldah, regarding me, disapprovingly. "Them clothes wout be half ironed, and you know I'm dreadful particular about my frills. I'm about sure that piecrust you made is heavy; and if I should set heavy piecrust before *his* folks, I don't know what wouldn't be to pay. Not that theirs is *anything* extra. Lucy's isn't fit to eat, for she keeps a girl, though she can't afford to do it no more than nothin', and lets her do the cookin', even for company."

I made no reply, but kept on with my work. The sunshine poured its golden flood in at the open door; bird songs flew faintly over from the distant woods. The party had just about reached Valley Cove, I thought, and it was more than likely that Sally Lane was getting up a *desperate* flirtation with my strange young gentleman, Mr. Allen. She said that she didn't think him nice looking at all, when he first came to the village and devoted his admiring glances to me instead of her, but Sally was capable of changing her mind concerning young gentlemen under favorable circumstances. Her tastes were continually undergoing complete revolutions as far as they were concerned, and there are no such opportunities for flirting in the world as a

picnic affords. They are always improved with a vengeance, too, and everything is so romantic and lovely!

Noon came, and with it his folks from the conference meeting.

"Why, Elizabeth," said Aunt Lucy, "why aren't you at the picnic? I thought of course you'd be there, and was thinking how pretty your hat would be for such an occasion."

I was silly enough to burst into tears and escape from the room. Aunt Huldah explained in energetic tones. I ran up stairs and locked myself into my chamber; and it would have been such a relief if I could only have been allowed to stay there and indulge in a good, long, hearty fit of crying. Then one feels so guilty and ashamed to go before strangers with red eyes and quivering lips, and it seemed so silly for a grown-up woman to cry because she couldn't go to a picnic. But the relentless will of Aunt Huldah soon called me to assist in placing the dinner on the table; so I bathed my face in cold water, and, trying to look as unconcerned and unconscious as possible, went down into the kitchen. Aunt Jane and Aunt Lucy were both there, begging to take my place in the performance of the household duties.

"Girls will be girls," said Aunt Jane, "and Lizabeth isn't to blame for wanting to go to the picnic. Mother used to put herself out to let us girls go when we were young."

I looked at her gratefully, but was very much surprised, for Aunt Jane was the greatest worker in the country, and was always talking about the waste of time. Aunt Lucy said not a word but bit her lips, and gave Aunt Huldah a glance that would have annihilated a less stout-hearted person.

Dinner was a very solemn ceremony. Uncle John tried to be jolly, and joked Aunt Lucy on the amazing way in which she had done her hair. Aunt Lucy always went to extremes in the fashion, but she would not respond. Aunt Jane frowned into her saucer of green peas. Aunt Liza looked severe, and talked in a mysterious way about Christian charity. Uncle Nathan looked as if he wished he hadn't come. Uncle Tom laughed nervously, and Aunt Huldah betrayed anger and defiance in every motion of her hand, as well as in her face. What strange ways his folks had! I began to believe that they were very friendly

to me, after all, though, as everybody said, they were odd, and it was hard to understand them. They were certainly indignant because I hadn't been allowed to go to the picnic, and had evidently been saying something which I had not heard on the subject. After the meal was over, Aunt Lucy came and whispered in my ear:

"I am not going to meeting this afternoon, so I can help Huldah do up the work. Go and put on your pink dress and your new hat, and Nathan will take the horse and carry you over to join the picnic party. It isn't likely they will be ready to come home until six o'clock, and you will have a good time, if it is late."

I thanked her, but said that I hadn't any desire to go then. She urged me, saying that she had a particular reason for wishing me to go. She could not tell me what it was, and I wondered what it *could* be. I was afraid that she would think me ungrateful, but indeed I could not have gone under the circumstances. I was ready to cry every instant. My eyes were red, my face was heated. All sorts of questions would be asked me concerning my delay, which would be extremely embarrassing; and then the last half of a picnic is not likely to be very fascinating to a newcomer, for by that time the couples are sure to be well paired off, and one feels herself to be unwelcome.

"Well," said she, at last, seeing that it was in vain to urge me longer, "since you won't go, I think I shall be obliged to go myself for a little while, towards night. I wish to see one of the party. I thought that I might send a message by you, but I perceive that I cannot do that."

I opened my eyes with surprise, for I was sure that Aunt Lucy didn't know a soul in Stillwater village beside our family, and how she had happened to know that there was a picnic at all was a mystery to me in the first place.

"O, if you have a message to send, I'll take it for you," said I; "or there is Sam. He isn't busy at all to-day, and can go as well as not."

She shook her head mysteriously. No, Sam wouldn't do. She must go herself. It would be best, she thought, unless I would go and stay. She seemed to be in a very strange state of mind, and very much exercised concerning my humble self. She insisted on my putting on my pink dress,

because she wanted to see how I looked in it; and asked me if the piano had been tuned, so that I could sing "The Last Rose of Summer," and "Then You'll Remember Me," if we should happen to have other company in the evening. I had an old piano, which was the only thing my mother had left me with the exception of an antique pearl ring which I always wore. Something uncommon was in the wind, I was quite sure, and, in my curiosity, I half forgot my disappointment. She pronounced the dress very becoming (Aunt Lucy was always interested in everybody's toilet), and after fastening a cluster of white roses in my hair, regarded me with great satisfaction. I had been aware for some time that she considered me a beauty, and felt extremely flattered, for she was a judge, certainly; she had been to Europe, and had lived in the city, and wore a black silk dress every day. I liked her better than any of his folks, though she *did* ask more questions than one knew how to answer, and was always finding fault with one's beaux, declaring that there was not a young man in Stillwater worth my notice. To be sure, I didn't care to marry one of these young men, but what could a young woman do without any one to take her to the singing school, or the spelling matches, and the society meetings, and go home with her from the sociables? I never saw her that she didn't pipe some note of warning, and tell me to be in no haste to leave single-blessedness, for I hadn't seen the right one yet. I believed *that* fully; and though my life under Aunt Huldah's reign was anything but a bed of roses, I was in no haste to see *him*—or I had not been until of late. I had other ambitions for myself. I thought I might become a great singer some day, if I could only obtain the means with which to pursue my studies. My mother had been one, though she died before she had earned a name. Uncle John, or rather Aunt Huldah, had a plenty of money; but, dear me! if she had been worth millions she couldn't have been persuaded to spend one cent on anything so frivolous as music. She objected to my going to the singing school very much, but as it was taught by the leader of the choir of which I was a member, and I went free, she had reluctantly given her consent.

The long summer day wore away at last. The shadows grew long and dusky under

the apple trees in the orchard, and the people from the conference meeting drove meditatively homeward. I spent the greater part of the afternoon in my own room, and came down to get tea for the company, in a more reconciled frame of mind. Aunt Lucy had driven away on her mysterious errand, and the parlor was full of deacons and deaconesses, as well as of uncles and aunts. They were not the most agreeable company to me, and I lingered over my task as long as possible, that I might have an excuse to remain out of the room. Clusters of sweet-brier roses reached into the dining-room windows, and I was filling some vases with them for the table, and thinking regretfully of a certain somebody whom I should never be likely to see again, when the voice of Aunt Lucy cried:

"Elizabeth, where are you?"

"Here, in the dining-room," I called, without pausing in my occupation; and before I was aware of it, the face of this certain somebody was looking laughingly into mine, and Aunt Lucy was introducing Mr. Allen—Cousin Frank.

"You've heard me speak of my nephew who was studying in Rome," she said, complacently.

Could it be possible that my handsome young gentleman was one of *his* folks?

Aunt Lucy slipped away, to assist in a search for Mrs. Deacon Perkins's cap, which she always carried in a box, and was always losing, and left us there alone.

"Fate is kinder than I anticipated," he said, half serious, half laughing. "I thought—I was sure she could not be so cruel as to hide you from me forever, but—this is more delightful than anything I could have hoped."

I tried to look a *little* offended, and *very* indifferent, but am afraid I didn't succeed very well. I *did* blush most provokingly, in spite of all my efforts to guard against this proceeding. Then Uncle John came in, and grew almost tearful over "sister Amy's son," for she had been his favorite sister, and he had never seen her boy before. She married a Mr. Allen, a rich man from the city, when she was a very young girl—the beauty of the county—and went to live abroad, where she died in less than two years.

"I couldn't keep my eyes away from you when I saw you at meeting last Sunday," said he. "I couldn't tell why. So you've

been in town two weeks, and didn't come over to make yourself known to your poor old uncle."

Mr. Frank colored to the roots of his hair, but seemed to have no excuse to offer at first.

"I didn't know that you lived at Stillwater when I first came here," he said, after a pause. "I came to sketch. Aunt Lucy recommended the place as being beautiful and romantic, and advised me to fall in love with the prettiest girl in the choir. She wasn't ready to come with me to see you then. I suppose I might have found out your whereabouts, and started off alone to visit you, but—"

"Then you must have fallen in love with Lizzie, if you took Aunt Lucy's advice," broke in Uncle John, who seemed to be mightily pleased about something.

"Of course I did," said he. "I didn't intend to, though, for I don't like advice concerning such matters."

I sought the society of the deacons and deaconesses, who remarked that I looked very rugged—country for blooming—and that my cheeks were as red as roses. They continued to be as red as roses all the evening, and I had the pleasure of sitting directly opposite cousin Frank at the tea-table. Aunt Lucy, who was glowing all over with triumph, was at the bottom of this arrangement. Aunt Huldah kept her suspicious eyes upon us, and was so much exercised over some mysterious thought, that she didn't pay the least attention when the minister said that Mrs. Sloan's butter couldn't be beaten by anybody in all Stillwater. Under any other circumstances she would have made him rue that rash remark. Indeed, I quite trembled for him when I heard it, for it had always been her boast that there was no butter in the State that began to equal hers, and it was only envy and jealousy that kept her from receiving all the prizes at the fairs.

Of course Aunt Lucy asked me to sing in the evening, and of course I could not refuse, though I was half angry with her, and resented being shown off at such a rate. But Deacon Perkins joined me in "The Last Rose of Summer," and the effect of our mingled voices couldn't have been very captivating. He sang one verse while I was singing another, and his voice sounded as if we were singing through a comb. I was so full of laughter that I gave out before the

end, and this took away all the embarrassment occasioned by Aunt Lucy's behaviour.

Cousin Frank found an opportunity to whisper a request to come out on to the piazza in my ear, and though I did not approve of myself for doing so, I could not help saying yes, it was so stupid in the parlor with all those prosy old people, talking about the blessing of health, the heathen, the crops, and their neighbors. It was lovely in the moonlight under the drooping roses, and we did not talk on either of these subjects, but found far more interesting ones. I shall not say what they were, but before I retired for the night I had promised to become his wife. Prudent Uncle John suggested that we did not know each other well enough yet to make an engagement, though he was very much pleased at the idea of our marrying. But Aunt Lucy thought it the most delightfully romantic affair she ever heard of. All the other aunts and uncles gave us their blessing with few words but evident satisfaction, with the exception of Aunt Huldah. She declared that she would never give her consent, and reproached me cruelly for being so

wicked to her as to go and marry one of *his* folks.

"She shan't touch one penny of my money if she marries Frank Allen," she said to Aunt Lucy.

"But there is no occasion for her to touch one penny of it," replied Aunt Lucy. "Frank's father was a very rich man, and left him more money than he knows what to do with. I am sure I think it's splendid for Lizzie, and for him, too. She's so pretty and bright, and—"

But I won't tell you all she said, for fear you will think me vain.

"Worse and worse," said Aunt Huldah. "Lizabeth is too stuck up for anything now, and so unconcerned in her mind, and given to the vanities of the world. 'Twill be the ruin of her; but then, I've done my duty, and I can't help anything."

As for Frank and me, we were more than satisfied with each other, and had no reason to doubt our love, though it sprang into existence at the first glance between us. And as years roll on it grows brighter instead of dimmer, and I have changed my mind entirely concerning "his folks."

LULA'S WEDDING.

BY MRS. L. S. GOODWIN.

It was blackberry season, and it was Saturday afternoon. On account of the latter our school had half holiday; and on account of the former the children were *en masse* on Pendleton's Hill. A week's generous sunshine had proclaimed emancipation to the darkey fruit, which held a convention in the open air, and danced thanksgiving fandangoes as the wind swept over.

From time immemorial Lula Pinckney and Gussy Blake had been very fond of each other. You receive this "time immemorial" with modifications, of course, as I felt obliged to the quotation from Shakspeare—"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well,"—which I saw lately on a baby's gravestone. As far back, and further, than the two children of eight and ten years could remember, which was time immemorial to them, Lula and Gussy had fancied playing together—a third party being always an intrusion. There had been a time when not only the village young people, but their parents, denounced the fact as ridiculous, and the mothers of the little sinners, aroused to a sense of responsibility, seriously attempted a reform. The result was that the little girl became as songless and mummy as a moulted canary, and likewise sacrificed her best doll on the altar of her grief, burying her in her flounced tarlatan and pink sash in a deep grave under the catnip; and the boy, called to drive home the cows without his pleasant companion, watered the buttercup and mouse-ear that bordered the road pastureward with his tears. Lula's Aunt Fanny, engaged to the postmaster's clerk, entered into the secret confidence of the juveniles, so far as to be the bearer to Gussy of an apple from which Lula had bitten a mouthful, and return to her niece with a touching tribute—a tablet, heart-shaped, cut from a shingle and inscribed:

"To memory of Mary Louisey—Died last Satday"—

which was duly placed over said doll's remains. It was understood that the engaged young lady interceded with her sister, Lula's ma, arguing what was the use; and it is certain that Lula's mother put on her bonnet, and half way to Mr. Blake's met Gussy's mother coming over; and the two mothers, with a good deal of feeling, inquired what

was the use, and decided it wasn't any use. Thus, at the expiration of a week, the maternal prohibition was removed, and two youthful souls made happy. Gussy passed a festive afternoon at Lula's; Marie Louise was exhumed in a remarkable state of preservation, was retarletaned and resashed by Aunt Fanny, who subsequently made a picnic on the identical spot in the garden where the funeral obsequies had been attended.

From this time, it would appear, the neighbors themselves concluded it wasn't any use to persecute the innocents, who thenceforth liked each other all the better for the woes they had undergone.

"Nobody called, 'For shame!'" or thought it queer when, upon that blackberrying afternoon, Lula and Gussy, hand in hand and carrying Indian baskets, set off cross-lots for Pendleton's Hill, while all the other children, meeting at the guideboard, proceeded in a flock out on the turnpike, trampling the dust till it rose up and flew into their eyes in self-defence, and by loud halloos announcing to Pendleton's Hill that they were on the way.

There was not much difference in the length of the two routes; at the field bars the little and the large party met, entered promiscuously, and commenced the business of the afternoon. Not half an hour had elapsed, however, when Lula and Gussy, as matter of course, found themselves strayed a short distance from their companions, and all the happier for the circumstance.

The berries they found abundant, as they would anywhere in the field, superb, too—plump as partridges, and glossy black as the raven's wing. Now and then a wagon rolled by in the road, the two children being near enough to see who was in it. From time to time the other children's voices came to them down the hillside, by which they learned the progress of the pickers, and reckoned their own comparative success. Emma Tracy had filled her coffee-pot up to the nose; Dudley Simms had his tinpail, first half, and soon three-quarters full; so to and fro was telegraphed the news, which inspired the boys and girls, and made them quite as emulous at berry-picking as ever they were over their books at school. Lula and Gussy would not be behind either here or there.

"O, this is a jolly place!" said the boy; let's keep house in it when we've got our dishes full."

He had discovered a rambling rock, with little green oases enclosed for dining-room, parlor and bed-chambers—a jolly play-place, to be sure. The little woman examined the spot, as she was able without neglect of pressing duty, and heartily acceded to her little man's proposition to go to housekeeping.

The promised recreation speeded their work. The brave little fingers did not mind scratches that even let out drops of blood; but by-and-by Lula, slipping off a log, got completely entangled in briars and thorns, which held her with the strength and fierceness of catamounts' claws, till Gussy sprang in and punished the claws with his boot-heels, and forced them to give her up. Her eyes were dewy that time, but upon Gussy saying how lucky it was she hadn't her basket in her hand, or all the berries might have been spilled, Lula agreed that it was very fortunate, and was merry again in a moment.

Soon after she felt a little secret trouble because her basket wouldn't fill. It had been almost full this ever so long, and fuller she could not make it. The truth was, the sun shone hot on the southern hillside, she had worked hard and was getting tired. Just when she was almost discouraged, what a delightful surprise! Up came her little man to her with a present of a brimming cup of the largest berries they had yet seen. His own basket was as full as it could hold; and, saying nothing, he had filled the cup once more to help Lula. He poured them on the top carefully, and now her basket was rounded full too.

"You're the best boy that ever was," said Lula, from her heart.

Pleased and proud, the boy took the twin baskets and placed them side by side on a big stump. Then delightedly, as a pair of robins in spring, the children set up housekeeping at their country-seat, Rambling Rock.

At once the conversation took a very interesting turn; Gussy informing Lula that he had seen a snake in the course of the afternoon, but did not tell her for fear she would be afraid—it was only a striped snake, couldn't hurt anybody, you know. And Lula said Susan Brown's uncle John saw a black snake in Georgia, in the time of the war, that was three hundred feet long, or else thirty feet long, she couldn't remember which. Practically, it was no odds now.

"Will you take some Charlotte Russia?" asked the little lady, lifting the foreign article off Adam's stomach for the benefit of Gussy's. It was observed that Eve had a significant dark stain in the region of the heart, and both looked exceedingly blue, as well they might.

So pleasantly absorbed were Lula and Gussy over their dinner, they did not hear for a while a horse coming down the road at an easy gallop; but on his nearer approach, they looked up, or rather down, and perceived that the rider was Aunt Fanny's beau, Theodore Dwight. He had evidently spied the happy children, and was watching with special intent; he never turned his face off them as he rode forward, gradually slackening from a canter to a trot, and from a trot to a walk; till when directly opposite he drew up at the fence, dismounted, throwing the bridle over a post; the children wondering just sufficiently to suspend dinner operations and gaze in return.

Through the bars and up the old woodland came the young man, slashing the vines and birch bushes with his riding-whip. I'm afraid his heart wasn't quite so gentle as the dear girl's whom he was going to marry. Older observers might have detected a gleam of merry mischief in those handsome black eyes.

"What are you here for, young ones?" was the interrogatory, rather gravely uttered, when Theodore had come close to them.

"Why, we're all here a berrying—the whole of us," Gussy replied, rising and pointing up the hill where their mates were.

"Burying the whole of you," severely rejoined Theodore. "Well, you may all deserve to be buried, so far as I know, but that is not what I am here for—I am here to marry you two, and for no other purpose under the sun."

The children looked incredulously and a little foolish, and the little girl observed:

"Nobody but the minister and Squire Bailey ever marries people, that I know of."

"Don't they? I wish to know if the postmaster's clerk isn't as good as either or both? Here is my authority," drawing a document from his pocket and beginning to read: "'To all whom it may concern. Greeting. By the authority of the Commonwealth of the United States, you are hereby commanded to have and to hold, his heirs and assigns forever, and any other business thought proper when met; the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so

help you Moses.' There," refolding the paper, "what do you think of that?"

The startled children looked at him and at each other, and ventured no syllable.

"You two," continued the naughty Theodore, "have been playing married since before I ever saw you; it is high time you were married, really, and really married you must be, here and now. Join hands. Stand up, Lula."

They obeyed tremblingly.

"Gussy Blake, do you take this Lula, to be your lawful wedded wife every day in the week, and Sunday besides; certain inalienable rights; weighed in the balances and found wanting; among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Lula Pinckney, do you take this Gussy to be your lawful wedded husband, in sickness or health, to love, honor and bay the moon, like any other Roman; *et tu brute!* America expects every man to do his duty, till death do ye part? In the name of the great Ticonderoga and the Continental Congress, I pronounce you man and wife. What I have put together, let no man join asunder. Go thy way for this time."

It is extremely doubtful whether the infant bride and groom heard three consecutive words of this patent marriage service, being too deeply overwhelmed by their sudden situation, and the voice and manner of the officiating Theodore, which were the most solemn and impressive possible. In the same style, without relaxing a muscle of his face, he shook hands with each; then, in place of lip service, presenting the bride with a sugar kiss from his pocket—a fashion which if generally adopted would, I should suppose, spare the feelings of maturer bridegrooms.

They saw him stride down the slope, mount his horse and ride on towards the village; yet there they stood, as it were, unable to move. It was well they had partaken the feast before; they had no appetite for it now. Lula bent, and with a pitying look picked up her pocket-handkerchief and the original couple in blue; Gussy, stealing a look at her face and seeing it white as a cloth, was on the verge of a crying fit.

What next they could have done is impossible to say, had they not been relieved by their mates calling their names from above. There was Amy Granger, up on a rock, shading her eyes with her hand from the glare of the sinking sun, looking down at them.

"Lula—h!" she called again. "Gussy

Bl—ake! Come; we've all got our dishes full—haint you? Aint you ready to go home? We be. If you're goin' our way, come."

For reply the boy took the baskets full of berries and scrambled up the hill, Lula following, and both silent. They simply felt very queer, and were glad of companionship; never dreaming that in carling less than formerly for each other's society they were imitating too many really married people. It was quite a treat to their friends to have them with them, though Lula and Gussy were so quiet and said so very little all the way home.

Poor Lula, with her strange secret weighing upon her, sat at the tea-table hardly tasting a morsel; nor of the holiday afternoon, to which she had been looking forward all the week, had she a simple incident to relate. Aunt Fanny, her helper in every emergency, said the child was not to be troubled with questions and comments—she was tired and would go to bed very early.

And she did go to bed early; but next morning Aunt Fanny said the poor child had rested very ill—had tossed and talked, and what was most singular, talked of Theodore. In returning from church Lula shrank behind with some little girls, while Gussy ran on before with his father. Had they been old enough for lovers, everybody would have been sure that Lula and Gussy had quarrelled, they appeared so shy of each other.

Thus matters went on till the middle of the week. Lula had shunned Theodore Dwight as she would have shunned that black snake of dubious length. But one evening he suddenly appeared in the parlor, where the sober little face was lying in Aunt Fanny's lap, and on her springing up and attempting to run away, caught her in his arms. Lula struggled hard, and failing to extricate herself, burst into tears. Aunt Fanny expressed her astonishment, and the young man, laughing, yet partly penitent, confessed his misdemeanor.

"I didn't want to be married," protested the mourning bride, with crimson cheeks and streaming eyes; "out in the berry-field, too. I hate Gus Blake, and never will speak to him again."

When the matter was finally explained to her, Lula felt a world better, though she can't quite forgive Theodore for his practical joke. No more can Gussy. The two children have become friendly again, but they are nothing as intimate as before the mock marriage.

LYNDON'S ROSE.

BY CARRIE D. BEEBE.

WE were playmates in boyhood and firm friends in later youth—Lyndon Anthon and I. Both were motherless, and I was fatherless, too. My father, at the time of his death, was in affluent circumstances, and Mr. Anthon, being his nearest friend, was appointed my guardian. So he came to live at my home—Maple River—bringing with him Lyndon, his only child. He was poor, but gentlemanly and kind; and he managed my father's estate in an able and conscientious manner, giving me, with Lyndon, a father's care.

Lyndon was a greater favorite with the household than I. He was a handsome boy, gentle and mild; while I was plain in appearance, and restless in disposition. He was blue-eyed and fair, I, dark, and tall for my age, seeming much older than I really was. At school I was a favorite with the tutors, but the pupils seldom liked me, for I was distant, and shrank into myself. The teachers were kind to me because I was invariably perfect in my recitations. I almost devoured my books, more because I wished to finish them and seek for something new, than from a love of study.

Lyndon always understood me, always loved me, whether I was moody or gay; and though a favorite with his schoolmates, he would never leave me if I desired his companionship. So we grew to manhood; and when we left college, he settled down to study law with his father, while I, who was allowed to follow the bent of my own inclinations, determined to set out upon an Eastern tour.

One evening, soon after I had made this resolve, Lyndon and I took a stroll down by the river side. There we met an ugly crone, a fortune-teller, belonging to a straggling band of gipseys, who were temporarily wandering about the neighborhood.

"Let me tell your fortunes, young gentlemen," she said, in a whining voice, which struck me as being assumed for the occasion.

"Why should I wish to know my fortune?" I asked, rather sharply. "It unfolds itself all too slowly, it is true; but I fancy it is scarcely lovely enough to charm me with a contemplation of its beauties."

"Let us hear what she has to say, Tom," said Lyndon, in his cheerful voice. "It can do no harm, assuredly."

"As you please," I answered, recalling the gipsy.

She thanked me as I placed some money in her hand, and then, as I stepped back, she turned to Lyndon, who stood with a bright but half-incredulous smile upon his face.

"You are a very pleasant-tempered young gentleman," she said, gazing upon his open palm with a wise and mysterious look upon her dark face. "A happy life lies before you. You will love, and, what is better, your lady will be true."

"Thank you, good mother!" laughed Lyndon. "I could not ask for a better fortune, I am sure."

There was something in the woman's weird voice which sounded strangely prophetic; and I turned, almost earnestly, towards her, to learn what she would say for me.

"And what of my fortune?" I asked.

She turned her piercing eyes to mine for a moment, and then took my hand.

"You are restless, changeable," she said. "Rocked hither and thither by every wind and tide, like a vessel without moorings. You will drift on for a time; but you, too, will love a noble woman. You will be content with her love, and it shall prove an anchor to your soul."

Afterwards, it seemed to me that she must have been gifted with supernatural powers. But now I think her perceptive faculties were very acute, and she had also, by practice, become skilled in reading characters from actions and faces.

She left a blessing with us, and then glided swiftly and silently away. Lyndon and I turned slowly towards home. The house seemed more brilliantly lighted than usual, and upon our arrival we were informed that a young lady, Miss Agatha Rodney, had just reached Maple River, and the guest-chamber had been prepared for her, according to Mr. Anthon's directions.

Lyndon smiled at this intelligence, for Miss Rodney was his cousin. She had been one of his favorites in his younger days, but he had not seen her for years, as both had been engaged with their studies.

I was greatly annoyed by what I inwardly termed Miss Rodney's untimely visit. I intended to leave Maple River in a month, at furthest, to be absent for years, perhaps; and I disliked to be disturbed in my last days at the dear old house. Still, I would not fail to welcome the lady for Lyndon's sake, and so I met her with courteous words.

For Lyndon's sake I tried to assist in entertaining her at first, and then it became very pleasant to me to do so for my own. Miss Rodney was dazzlingly beautiful, with a fascinating manner, whose influence I sought in vain to resist. I was intoxicated with her beauty, for she seemed to me the embodiment of all that was good and glorious upon earth. I had never been in the slightest degree impressible to woman's charms before; had never loved until I met her. But there was a peculiar softness in her expression and manner towards me, which won me in spite of myself. I asked her to be my wife, and she promised. I remembered the gipsy's prophecy, believed, and was satisfied.

The weeks fled swiftly, and one morning I went out to meet Agatha in the garden. I found her earnestly engaged in conversation with Lyndon. His voice was raised to a higher key than usual, and he seemed to be expostulating with her. Wondering somewhat, I passed on, until her words, flowing clearly through the garden alleys, reached my ear.

"Love him!" she exclaimed, with a mocking laugh; "I do not, indeed. He is too ugly, decidedly. But I am poor, you know, Lyndon, and Maple River is a fine old place. I greatly prefer to be its mistress, to a situation as teacher or seamstress. I can afford to tolerate Tom for its sake, especially as he is blind enough to believe in me."

"Agatha," he answered, warningly, "you have gone too far in presuming upon my silence. Tom is my friend. I love him far better than I love you. Rest assured that unless you break the engagement in as gentle a manner as possible, I shall not hesitate to expose you."

"You dare not!" she exclaimed, scornfully. "It would be the height of folly for you to do it, because he would never believe you against me. But, if you will not listen to reason, you may do your worst!"

"I will!" he cried, passionately. "And he will know I speak the truth, for I never yet deceived him!"

"You never have, dear Lyndon!" I exclaimed, breaking in upon them like a ghost in the pallor of my passion. "As for you," I said, turning to where Agatha shrieked and feigned to swoon, "I must never look upon your face again!"

I think I would have fallen but for Lyndon's protecting arm. He led me to my room, bade me lie down, and bathed my forehead, soothing me into a semblance of quietude.

Agatha left Maple River; how, or when, I know not; and I rose and stalked about more restless than before, hating the sunshine, the south wind, the bird songs, the flowers—loving the tempests, the lightnings and the storms. I had no mother's memory to restrain me—for I had not yet learned to love one I had never known—and I cursed all women alike, as false-hearted, frivolous and despicably vain.

I besought Lyndon to accompany me upon my travels, but he refused. He was already indebted to me for his education—he must work now. I was wealthy, and could afford to travel. But he was poor and proud—he would never be an idler.

So I departed alone. Hither and thither I wandered, "drifting like a vessel without moorings." Letters from Lyndon reached me, telling me of his labors, his triumphs. Then he wrote in a saddened strain, giving me the news of his father's sudden death.

I mourned Mr. Anthon sincerely, for he had always been to me a valued friend. I wrote to Lyndon, asking him to take charge of my affairs at Maple River, just as his father had done. After a time his letters resumed their old cheerful tone, and at last he sent me word that he was soon to be married.

I had never seen Rose Dorr, who was to be his wife. Lyndon seemed to fear that I would be displeased with his marriage, and enumerated at length the many virtues of his betrothed. I must come back to Maple River, he said. It would be pleasanter for me than ever before, and Rose should be my sister.

I smiled at this, half pitying Lyndon, as I remembered my own experience in love. But when two years had passed away I determined to return, Lyndon urged it so strongly, even proposing that Rose and he should leave Maple River, if I preferred solitude.

I answered, that if he did so I would never

visit the place again, and so he was content.

I took my way homeward slowly, writing sometimes to Lyndon; though I did not tell him the precise time at which I expected to reach Maple River, for I wished to surprise him, in a certain degree, at least. I wished to see whether he was as happy in his married life as he represented, so I would not give him an opportunity to spread a mask of preparation before my eyes.

It was evening when I reached home, the twilight of early spring. The trees were just budding, the hyacinths and daffodils were in bloom, and the whole air was sweet. A hush seemed to hang over the house and over the river, very soothing to the senses of a weary wanderer.

I paused a moment upon the porch. The door opened, and a servant came out. He recognized me at once, and was about to rush in with the news of my arrival, but I checked him.

"Is Mr. Anthon at home?" I asked.

"Yes sir," was the reply; "he and Mrs. Anthon are spending the evening in the library."

"You need not announce me—I will seek them there."

He bowed, and stood aside for me to enter. Removing my hat, I passed quietly through the hall, which was not lighted, to the open library door.

One glance within, and I paused, as before a sacred shrine. The evening was slightly cool, and a fire had been kindled within the grate. The bright flame leaped gayly upward from the bed of glowing coal, casting a scarlet light over the room. The blinds of the deep eastern windows were open, and the white rays of the moon came through the lace curtains, casting shadows of swaying lily-bells and rose-cups on the carpet.

Lyndon sat musing near the fire, his cheek resting against his hand, and a soft glow in his eyes as he glanced over to where Rose sat, with his child upon her knee—the little child which bore my name.

Rose turned more toward the moonlight, shading the closed eyes of the boy as she rocked slowly to and fro, and softly sang a slumbrous song. She was slender and pale, scarcely beautiful, but O, how white and pure!

They were so happy, so content! And I, a weary pilgrim, stood at the doorway, as dazed as I might have been with a glimpse of heaven. I was very weary, and there

was something in that low song which touched me to the heart. It was not that it brought sweet remembrances of my own childhood. Perhaps if I had ever heard my mother's song, it might have made me better, purer; and now, as I stood, something like reverence for her whose life was taken for mine, rushed over me for the first time. I had never known why my life had been so utterly desolate until now.

How long I stood with that weary soul-hunger within me, I cannot tell. I remember wondering, as I looked upon Rose's white face, whether it was the moonlight, or the firelight, or the mist about my eyes, which cast the halo round her head.

The servant remained in the hall, surprised at my strange conduct, or curious to observe the meeting. I turned back and entered the parlor.

"You may tell them I am here," I said, briefly, as I passed him.

A moment afterward Lyndon rushed into the room with his eager welcome. He seemed as young and joyous as ever; and I had grown so old!

"I'm tired," I said, in reply to his questions about my health, "both in body and mind."

"No wonder!" he exclaimed. "You must never wander away in such a senseless manner again. We will keep you here, Rose and I, and make you happy in spite of yourself!"

"You are very good," I answered, with a smile. "But I fancy the elements of happiness or misery lie in my own bosom. Still, the sight of your face always did bring me content. Rose is well, I hope?"

"O yes. She is scarcely ever ill, though she may be somewhat paler since the baby came. She was quite willing to name him for you. She feels towards you as a sister, and very grateful for all your kindness to me."

I believe I winced at this. I was something of a cynic yet. A woman's scorn had been bitter enough, but a woman's gratitude must be more tiresome still. Then I remembered the picture I had seen in the library, and banished the ungenerous thought, as I fell to wondering how Rose would meet me.

I was not long in doubt. She came in almost immediately, and Lyndon rose, proudly, I thought, and said:

"My wife, Tom, and your sister Rose."

She extended her hand with a few words of welcome, and took her seat near us, with

a bright but pleasant smile upon her face. She did not seem demonstrative, and yet she was not shy. I felt at ease at once. She seemed to expect me to act my own pleasure, and her presence was not an unpleasant restraint, as I had feared it might be.

She soon marshalled us into the library, saying the parlor was cheerless without a fire, and drew up an armchair for me opposite Lyndon's, by the grate. She did not object to cigar smoke, but said she seemed to thrive in it; and in a few moments I was puffing away at a choice Havana, my feet upon the fender, and my elbow resting upon the arm of my chair, wondering where my weariness had gone.

Then Rose said to Lyndon that he must take me up to my room to bathe my face when I had finished smoking, and flitted away. So, when I threw aside my cigar, we went up stairs, and there Lyndon left me.

"You will find everything right in your room, I think," he said, as he turned to go down again. "Rose is very precise in such matters."

Everything was right; just at hand, somehow, and there was a cheerful fire freshly lighted within the grate. The room at first seemed unchanged, but when I came to look more closely about me, it appeared brighter than ever before. The furniture was just the same, but two or three sunny pictures had been added, and some pretty trifles in the way of toilet articles. A Parian vase stood upon the mantel, filled with fragrant hyacinths, thin lily-like green leaves drooping gracefully about the blooms. There was a comfortable easy-chair, too, which looked very inviting, but I did not stop to try it. Hastily arranging my toilet, I returned to the library.

Lyndon still sat by the fire, but Rose stood a little apart, in the full blaze of the chandelier. Why did the light fall over her so whitely? Or was it her pale face which made the light seem clearer? And yet she was not too ethereal.

I took my place near Lyndon, and asked for my little namesake.

"He is asleep," Rose said, "and I do not wish to disturb him to-night."

Then she touched the bell, and tea was brought up; a cosy little supper of her own ordering, and with my favorite dishes too. When I laid my head upon the pillows that night, I felt more at peace than I had been before in years.

The days passed. Rose treated me as a sister, but a sister only. I never met her, accidentally, in any of the secluded garden paths. Her eyes always met mine serenely and quietly, and yet she was almost as frank and free as Lyndon himself. If it chanced that I did not go with Lyndon to his office, but remained at home throughout the day, I would find an entertaining volume upon the table in my room, and Rose would be unusually occupied with her household affairs. Or, if she brought out her sewing upon the porch in the afternoon, to watch for Lyndon's return, the boy was always playing at her feet, always seeming to come between us and keep us a little apart, though he was very dear to both.

I pondered upon these things one evening as I sat alone in my room. I was glad that it was so; glad there was one woman in this world who did not expect me to fall down and worship her; and I found myself repeating the lines—

"None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;

They knelt to God more than they used—that was all."

It was true. She seemed to bring me up to the level of her pure thought and life, and the bitter cynicism of my nature vanished. I had never known what it was to have a home before—never realized the full beautiful meaning of the word.

The season went by and autumn came. I was content to live thus quietly, and had no wish to roam. There came a midsummer day in September, sultry and scorching. I did not go with Lyndon in the morning, but after lunch set out for a walk. I might not have been quite well—I scarcely can tell how it was—but the sun seemed to scorch me, blind me. I groped my way back to the house, and found that Lyndon had returned early on account of the extreme heat.

"My head burns and throbs fearfully, Lyndon," I said, "and I am dizzy almost to blindness!"

I sank upon the sofa, and he rushed out into the hall, exclaiming with a vehemence which frightened me:

"Rose! Rose! I do believe Tom has had a sunstroke. Do come and see what we can do for him!"

"We," he said; but I think he was too frightened to render me any assistance. In a moment Rose entered the room, as calm

and quiet as ever. She first placed a cool pillow under my head.

"Don't be alarmed, Lyndon dear," she said, in a tone which calmed us both at once. "I don't apprehend anything serious."

She drew up an ottoman to the side of the sofa, and commenced to bathe my forehead from a bowl which she held in her hand, with a liquid, cool, fragrant and clear. Then she brought me a glass of iced lemonade. After this she resumed her seat, bathing my head again, and lightly brushing back my hair.

In a few moments the pain was charmed away. I closed my eyes and wondered what mesmeric power was hidden within her light slender fingers, that their touch should thrill me so. A subtle soothing influence seemed to steal over me—something like the magic of a mother's song to a weary child—and I slept.

When I awoke it was evening, and my mind was strangely clear; though I opened my eyes with the consciousness that I had whispered some one's name in waking. No one was within the room, but through the lace-draped windows I saw Lyndon's form, resting against a pillar of the porch. Rose sat beside him, in a low rustic chair. She wore white; something dainty and misty; and as I looked, Lyndon plucked a spray of cypress blooms, with their light feathery foliage, from the pillar, and laid it against her hair.

I closed my eyes and turned my face away. Why? Was it strange that Lyndon should love his wife, and that wife—Rose—the queen of true-hearted women?

I said my mind was clear. I knew then, for the first time, that I was wildly, madly in love with Rose—with Lyndon's Rose!

God knows I never meant it to be so. I tried to love them alike, as brother and sister. I had been so happy under the delusion that I had succeeded in doing so, and this was the end!

I groped my way to my room, wondering if murderers were ever more conscience-smitten than was I. Lyndon had always been my friend—a friend such as few can boast. Years before, he had saved me from a life of misery, and this was his reward.

I looked out upon the warm, glowing landscape; and shivered as with cold. The river sparkled in the moonlight, and brought me back a memory of the gipsy's prophecy. I had loved—but I was drifting still—rocked

and dashed by the pitiless waves of a bitter, longing despair.

There was but one thing for me to do. I must leave Maple River forever. I must go—but whither? O, how dreary seemed the world to me then, how cold!

Two days afterwards I stood upon the porch equipped for my journey. Rose stood near me, her child in her arms; and Lyndon was in his room preparing to accompany me to the depot.

I took the boy for a farewell romp, to hide my real sorrow, but he looked into my face with eyes so like his father's I only kissed him silently. His nurse appeared at that moment to take him for his morning nap, and unclasping his arms from my neck, I gave him into her charge. I heard Lyndon's voice giving some directions to a servant, and then I turned to bid Rose adieu.

"Good-by," she said, regretfully. "I am sorry you do not like us well enough to remain, but I hope you may be happy, wherever you may go."

What could I tell her? The touch of her hand—her very presence, thrilled my soul—and yet we were so far apart.

"Thank you," I said, at last.

I waited. I was looking upon her face for the last time, perhaps. For the moment reason gave way to passion. She had been so good to me—and I loved her so! I could not leave her to think I was ungrateful for all her kindness.

"Rose," I said, white and calm from the intensity of my passion, "it is because I am too happy here, that I am going away."

She looked up quickly. She had always seemed to divine my motives readily, and she understood me at once. A scarlet flush suddenly flamed her cheeks, and, retreating a step or two, she drew herself up proudly. Her eyes flashed, if altogether in anger, I could not tell.

"If that be true," she answered, slowly, "you must remain. Lyndon and I will leave at once."

"No, no!" I cried, quickly. "You are unjust to speak so!"

Lyndon came out upon the porch. He heard my last words, and saw the flush upon the face of his wife.

"You are not quarrelling, I hope," he said, half in jest, half in regretful surprise.

"No," I answered, feeling guilty at heart. "Rose seems to fear you are trespassing upon my bounty in remaining here. She

cannot know how much I love you, or what you have always been to me."

I could have sobbed outright, my feelings were so overwrought. Rose seemed undecided whether to speak or not; so I turned, and touching my hat, hurried down the walk. Lyndon stopped to converse a moment with his wife, and then they came down to the gate together. Rose reached out her hand to me.

"Good-by, once more, Tom," she said. "I did not mean to anger you, for I wish to be your friend."

"You have been—you are—little Rose," I answered. "God bless you!" And then we were whirled away.

Lyndon parted from me affectionately, and I set out upon my wanderings. To the remote ends of the earth I went, but my conscience would not cease to upbraid me. Never had I loved Lyndon so much as now, since I had proved unworthy of his friendship. All his little acts of kindness in youth came up before me, all his generous devotion and love, and the memory smote me as a two-edged sword.

I had taken with me no memento of Rose. Not a picture she had touched, not a trifle which her deft hands had fashioned, not a flower which she had gathered. I do not mean that I was praiseworthy in this, for it would have been torture. I only prayed that I might forget her, but forgetfulness never came.

Lyndon often wrote me, and I answered when I could. One day when I opened a letter from him, two card photographs fell from it; one of himself, and one of Rose. I was thankful for Lyndon's, and kept it near me always. But the other? I think to have looked twice into those clear eyes would have driven me mad! I could not keep it; so I held it into the blaze of the lamp until it was consumed, and the flame had scorched my fingers, and then smiled to feel the pain.

Months passed. I was growing thin and old. Nothing seemed to interest me. Lyndon's letters came but seldom, and at last he wrote me of the death of his boy. My heart ached for him; and I longed to be able to comfort him, but I dared not think of Rose in her sorrow.

After a time another letter came, written in a hand so unlike Lyndon's of old I scarcely recognized it. He was very ill—was dying. The physicians gave him no hope.

"I have been ill for a long time," he wrote,

"and have learned submission. Only for little Rose, I should be content; but it is hard to leave her so alone. She will return to her home when I am gone, but she has neither father nor brother, and, sometime, may need your care. Of late I have fancied it was because you loved her you went away. If it were true I should be quite content, my dear true friend! But whether I am right or not, you will, for my sake, see she does not need a brother's care when I am gone."

This grieved me sorely, sorely! I knelt, and my lips, unused to prayer, pleaded with my Maker for his dear life. Then I wrote to Lyndon, telling him the truth; of all my sorrow and wretchedness, and asking him to write me only one word to say that he forgave me.

I waited for a reply patiently, but it was months before one came. Then I received a short note from a neighbor and mutual friend, telling me of Lyndon's death. He had received my letter, and, unable to answer it, bade his friend to write me of his unaltered affection, and wishes for my happiness.

It was so like Lyndon, my dear, true-hearted boy! and the tidings brought me some degree of peace. I made my preparations to return to Maple River, for Rose had left, and the place needed my care. After I reached home I wrote to Rose, assuring her of my desire to be her friend, and she must not hesitate to call upon me if she ever needed my counsel.

Her mother, Mrs. Dorr, answered the letter in a chatty and rather effusive strain, thanking me for her daughter, and for herself, urging me to call often at her house; but never a word from Rose.

Two years passed by. I had not availed myself of Mrs. Dorr's invitation; but one day, when I chanced to drive past her house, which was about ten miles distant from Maple River, an irresistible desire to see Rose once more came over me. So I stopped, and ascended the steps of the fine old mansion, which showed some signs of decay, though the grounds were neatly kept.

I found Mrs. Dorr in the parlor. She was a well-preserved lady of fifty, and seemed to be a very practical sort of person. She sent up to Rose of my arrival, and then informed me, in a semi-confidential way, that she had persuaded her daughter to lay aside mourning, and enter society once more. I had called just in the right time, she said. There

was a large company of city friends invited to her house for the month of June. Would I honor her, and become her guest also? And here followed numberless excuses for the very plain manner in which they lived. However, if I would come, they would endeavor to the best of their ability to make it pleasant for me. Here Rose entered and interrupted her mother's apologies.

Rose came forward and quietly gave me her hand. I wondered if she remembered my words when I held it in mine last. A little flush shot over her face, and there was a slight flutter of the white eyelids, but that was all. She might have been welcoming the merest acquaintance, but for that. She sat near me and commenced conversation in the old way, graceful and quiet, though she did not speak of the past.

Before I left, Mrs. Dorr renewed her invitation. I accepted for a few days, and, according to promise, arrived at her house about the middle of June.

I found the place quite gay. There was Mr. Algood, an elderly gentleman, who seemed very fatherly to the remainder of the company, and very polite to Mrs. Dorr; Mr. Berwick, a handsome and dashing widower of thirty-five; Agatha Rodney, as stately as ever, and almost as beautiful; and a few other ladies and gentlemen, ordinary in appearance, who served as excellent foils for the more brilliant members of the company.

I soon began to fear that I had been too tardy in my arrival, for Mr. Berwick seemed absolutely fascinated with Rose, and was very marked in his attentions to her. I fancied that Agatha disliked him exceedingly. I had joined the company, only that I might have an opportunity to woo Rose. I was an awkward lover, and, somehow, could never bring about a single *tete-a-tete*; while Mr. Berwick, who was always perfectly at ease, monopolized her upon every walk or ride. After watching them for two or three days, I became fully convinced that Rose loved him. I would have returned to Maple River, but somehow, I could not. So I remained, and grew more and more desperate each day.

One evening, when I had listened to the pretty nothings which Mr. Berwick uttered for the amusement of Rose, I became half frantic with jealousy, and rushed out on the porch to sit in the moonlight alone. I was scarcely seated, when I heard a footstep, and Agatha Rodney stood beside me.

"Don't look so forbidding!" she exclaimed,

in a low tone, and glancing about to assure herself that no one was near. "You hate me!" And she sat down by my side. "I don't love you. So no harm can come of this interview."

I smiled a little in spite of myself; I believe I admired the woman still; and said, "Certainly not," in reply.

"You love Rose—" she began.

I started up.

"There, don't confess it, silliness! Sit down! every one knows it already. I like Mr. Berwick—"

"And his wealth," I suggested.

"Certainly," she coolly replied. "You observe, Mr. Castleton, how perfectly we understand each other. Now be rational, and don't interrupt me if I happen to wander from Rose; I shall speak of her in a moment; some one may come out. Mr. Berwick fancies he is in love with Rose, but I know better. He only likes her because she has a certain reserved manner toward all gentlemen, and so he must, of course, win her to fall down and worship him."

"Rose loves him," I said.

"I cannot tell, but I don't believe it. This I do know. Mrs. Dorr is very anxious for Rose to marry."

"But why?"

"O, because she herself is engaged to Mr. Algood, and after their marriage, which is to take place in the fall, Rose will be in the way. You know very well how it is to have a third person in a family, for you tried it six months with Lyndon and Rose. Don't flush! I know nothing of your experience except what I surmise. What I mean to say, is this. If Mr. Berwick asks Rose to be his wife, Mrs. Dorr will surely urge her to accept him."

"Whether Rose loves him or not? Surely, Rose would follow her own inclinations in the matter?"

"I am no prophet—at least where her action is concerned. But we all know a faint heart never conquers. Mr. Berwick likes me—was on the eve of a proposal three weeks ago. I know he is fickle, but it is his worst fault."

She flitted away, and I sat for some time pondering upon her words. At last I rose and reentered the parlor.

"Mr. Castleton," said Mrs. Dorr, as I took my seat near Mr. Berwick and Rose, "you have not heard of our arrangements for to-morrow. We propose a ride up to the sum-

mit of Mount Hope. The roads are rough a part of the way, but the view from the top of the mountain is really grand."

"It is, indeed," I replied. "But will we not need to make some arrangement about the carriages to-night?"

"Hardly," returned Mr. Berwick. "Mrs. Dorr has a large carriage, which will easily carry all but four of us. You and I each have our horses and lighter phaeton, and can take a lady apiece."

"A very good arrangement," I observed, carelessly. Agatha turned and looked me full in the face, but I did not need her warning. "Mrs. Anthon," I continued, "will you honor me with your company on the trip?"

I can hardly describe the effect which my words produced. Mr. Berwick sprang to his feet, but recovering himself, sat down again. A "wide-mouthed smile" showed itself upon Mrs. Dorr's face, and Mr. Algood's lips twitched suspiciously under his white mustache. Agatha looked as though she would like to pat me upon the head, and the remainder of the company showed evident signs of surprise.

Rose only smiled.

"I shall be very glad to accompany you, Mr. Castleton," she said.

Next morning, quite early, we set out. I handed Rose into the carriage with a little feeling of pride, and as my bays were slightly restive, one of the ladies in Mrs. Dorr's carriage requested that I should lead the way, as she was rather timid. I readily consented, and away we sped. The horses were fleet, but easily controlled by a firm hand. Mr. Berwick closely followed us, and I was glad to see Agatha by his side. Rose seemed to enjoy the drive, and was almost gay.

In about an hour we reached the summit of the mountain. Mrs. Dorr's carriage arrived soon afterward, and the whole party took seats under a spreading tree, and discussed the beautiful view. The mountain was steep, though not very high, and at its foot lay a fertile valley. We rambled about for some time, enjoying the breeze, for the day was oppressively warm. Our luncheon was scarcely despatched, when heavy thunder-clouds began to form, some above, and some almost beneath us.

"We must return at once," said Mrs. Dorr, "and there is no time to lose. Some of the horses may be afraid of thunder, and there is no place of shelter until we reach the base of the mountain."

The ladies made all possible haste to prepare for our return. Rose, quite ready, stood by my side. Mr. Berwick placed Agatha in his carriage, casting ominous glances toward Rose meanwhile. Then he came quickly forward.

"Rose," he said, abruptly, "the storm is about to break, and as Mr. Castleton's horses are unusually spirited, I fear they will become unmanageable when the thunder bursts. My own are very gentle, and there is plenty of room for you in my carriage. Return with me, wont you? I dare not trust you with him."

They were watching us from the other carriage. I turned to Rose. I think my face was white.

"Mrs. Anthon must decide for herself," I said, coldly.

Rose smiled, and laid her hand upon my arm.

"I am not afraid to go with you, Tom," she said.

There was a baffled expression upon Mr. Berwick's face as he turned away. A merry laugh broke from the party in Mrs. Dorr's carriage. For myself, I was almost delirious with joy, but Rose was trembling, frightened.

"I hope I have not been overbold!" she exclaimed, doubtfully, in a low voice.

"Overbold?" I cried, unable to hide my triumph. "If you have been, I'll match you, my darling!" And I stooped and touched her lips with mine before them all. Then I handed her into the carriage, and bowing, led the way.

The ride down the mountain was grand, for the clouds were beautiful; some seeming to send before us, below our path. The forked lightnings flashed around us, and the thunder was deep and loud. There was slight danger in the situation, perhaps, but, shared together, the very peril was sweet and full of fascination. I think we scarcely spoke during the ride. I was too happy for words, and as for Rose, her clear eyes had lost their hardihood, and drooped before my own. But I knew her heart was mine, and all the bitter craving agony of years was recompensed.

After we reached home the ladies kissed and congratulated Rose—I think they sobbed over her a little—and then Agatha asked their congratulations too. She seemed happy—perhaps she was truly so. I was too overjoyed to judge her, even if I had the right.

This was three years ago. To-night I sit in the library, and again the bright fire glows within the grate, casting rosy shadows about the room. My life-ship drifts restlessly no longer, but lies peacefully anchored by the inexplicable strength and power of my darling's love.

Rose—not Lyndon's now, but mine—sits in the rocker, soothing to slumber our little child—my boy, with Lyndon's name.

O Lyndon! my more than brother! when

we meet at last where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," you will know that I never, even in thought, meant to wrong you. You will know that, next to the child which sleeps upon Rose's knee, I love the one resting by your side; and next to my darling's love, which is the strongest emotion of my passionate soul, your memory, O Lyndon, is cherished in my heart of hearts!

MAID BRINDLE'S DEBT.

BY MRS. L. S. GOODWIN.

ANYBODY would have said that Christie's daisy was a beauty. All whose opinion was worth most to the little girl had consented to that fact, after having examined it by the garden wall. It had not blossomed much the first year, having had as much as it could do to get its roots settled in the new soil and spread out for a worthy future. But this second season it sprang up deep green and thrifty; it sent up numbers of stalks; the stalks budded and the buds blos— No, not quite—dear, dear!

The plant was given Christie by an English lady who lived a short time in the neighborhood, and becoming homesick went back over the great water; but the plant was evidently satisfied with America—that daisy which made its little new mistress feel as if she owned half Great Britain.

Its stems were laden with buds, as I said, like bees swarming; and two or three began to uncloze. I think that perhaps they might have opened wide, but being modest, and Christie bringing so many people to look at them, they hesitated a little. However, at sunset, when the child came alone, they promised sacredly to receive her next morning with one magnificent bouquet.

They meant it, and they would have kept their word but for Maid Brindle. Maid Brindle was a heifer owned by Christie's father, and liked by him half as much, we will say, as the child liked her posies. She was a sweet-tempered young cow—Maid Brindle; had never kicked over the milk-pail, which every night and morning she filled to the very brim with the creamiest fluid ever seen; never was known to stray a rod, and wasn't supposed to be capable of breaking down a fence of spiders'-webs.

Till that night. She couldn't have been herself; some impious spirit must have taken possession of her for the hour, or she never would have been guilty of that raid on the garden. A dark deed, befitting the time. I choke with grief while I record it against her. Whether she found a weak spot in the fence, or took the leap of an antelope, I never have had the heart to inquire; but in some way she entered that forbidden precinct, and

walked straight across it—as shown by her tracks—only snipping a few turnip-tops by the way, to Christie's daisy.

Now cattle do not commonly eat daisies—you know that. You have seen them often enough blooming untouched by the roadside, or in the pasture with all the grass beside them gnawed close. A toad on a journey across the hardest grazed field would be sure of finding an inn, a shady resting-place, beneath a daisy clump. That, again, is why I say Maid Brindle must have been disordered in her mind.

For she ate Christie's daisy up, branch and leaf, then lay down on the spot—as if brooding over it could do any good—and slept soundly till Aurora came forth from the chambers of the east, and Josiah ditto from the kitchen with the milk-pail.

Let us draw a curtain over what followed. Yet through the curtain we shall hear poor Christie sobbing and crying, crying and sobbing, enough to melt our eyes to tears. Her mother pitied but could not help her; her father took a more practical view of the matter, and passing his cup for more coffee—poor Christie sat through breakfast without tasting a morsel—he said, with emphasis:

"Maid Brindle shall pay damage, little daughter, as true as you've a heart, and she has horns. Come now, stop crying, and tell me what you valued your daisy at; how much should you have asked for it if somebody had wanted to buy?"

"Why, papa, I should have told them in the first place I didn't want to sell, and—and I should have asked—should have asked as much as two dollars," said Christie, to whom that was a large sum of money.

"Very well," said her father, "she shall pay you. Mother, tell Hannah to skim Maid Brindle's milk by itself, beginning with this morning, and so on, until six pounds of butter are made from the cream. That will sell for two shillings a pound, and the two dollars are to be given Christie for her own."

This fiat of justice had the effect to divert the child somewhat from her great sorrow, so that after breakfast she nibbled a cracker—though then and for days afterwards she ro-

fused to touch milk—and went to school and learned her lessons well. It was quite comforting to tell the tale to her schoolmates and receive their sympathetic “too bads.”

On Wednesday, which was half holiday, as the little scholar came running in at the gate with her slate and books, Hannah said to her from the kitchen door, and I must add, with an untimely smile:

“Your butter’s all ready, miss. There’s six pound lumps, as yaller as buttercups and shiny, hard as ice, each stamped with a crowin’ cock on top. And I heern your father say to Si to put the horse in the wagon after dinner, and take the butter’n you down to the store and get you the money on it. But you’ll have to come back afoot, or leastways, I sh’d s’pose you’d rather, for Si’s to go round by Beach’s Corner and fetch home some pigs. Ha, ha—two dollars—how rich you’ll be!”

Hannah had given the programme correctly; and duly Christie found herself riding beside Josiah, watching the weighing of her butter at the store, and on the way home alone and on foot, with a two-dollar greenback wrapped in a bit of paper and clenched tightly in her right hand.

Time had partially healed her daisy wound; the afternoon was balmy bright; the birds sang as if they had never known a grief; the cash in hand seemed a better equivalent for her flowers than she could have imagined it ever would, and Christie was—yes, happy.

Half way home she chose to leave the dusty road for a path across her father’s field and through a thin grove of plums and oaks. When in the middle of the grove, walking slowly, thinking what to do with her money, some one near by spoke her name.

“Christie! Christie! Christie!”

Three times; there might be something ominous in that. The child was too startled to answer promptly, but after the third call she said, timidly, looking all around and seeing no soul:

“Here I am.”

Then all was silent a while. The voice was not Hannah’s, nor her mother’s, nor any one’s that she knew. It seemed to be a stranger’s and cross-grained besides, as if its owner had some sort of grudge against her. Well, how odd.

“So you’ve seen fit to make much ado about nothing,” said the voice again, quoting Shakspeare, “and have got your two dollars, and set all the family against me. A three-

year-old heifer must be very correct in her behaviour; a girl three times three years old can be as silly as she pleases. I wonder that money don’t burn your fingers off!”

At this moment, when Christie’s surprise was the greatest, there was a slight movement beyond a thicket twenty yards distant, and Maid Brindle turned her face full on hers. The child had been on the point of running away with all speed, but while none the less doubting and amazed, there was on the heifer’s face, framed in evergreens, with a twig of immortal oak tipping her comely horns, a mild sorrow, an appeal for forgiveness and pity, which in spite of everything touched a tender place in Christie’s heart, and held her just there, waiting for whatever should happen next.

The cow opened her mouth with a low moo, and continued—for there could be no doubt, wonderful as it was, that the face and voice belonged equally to the quadruped:

“This is the first time we have met since that unfortunate affair. Before that you used to come and talk with me every day. It seems we are to be sworn enemies forever.” Her tone was much softened now.

“I did not think of seeing you here,” was the indirect and confused reply. “I understood you were in the hill pasture.”

“So I am, or was,” the heifer rejoined, keeping her eye fixed on Christie, “until I came out to meet you. I want to ask if you think it right to have brought a poor brute into disrespect as you have me. You will get me sold to the butcher next. And all for an accident. I didn’t even know I was in the garden, much less that I was doing mischief to your daisy. A fly bit my ear so I couldn’t rest, and I rose up and walked, and fed a trifle on whatever came to hand in the darkness.”

The heifer looked as though she would burst into tears in another minute, and Christie felt as though she must throw her arms about the creature’s neck and cry with her.

“That money,” resumed Maid Brindle, “is likely to work you more mischief than you have done me—the money you are so proud of. It is an unjust gain, and unless purified you had better by half never see it again. I have still an affection for you, notwithstanding your harsh treatment, and will tell you the truth. Put your greenback under the roots of the oak by which you are standing, leave it there all night; then to-morrow morn-

ing you can take it away, and all is right. The wood nymphs will have banished the evil it contains, and given it their benediction. In the days of your youth, listen, O listen to wisdom that speaks to you through me—Maid Brindle!"

Christie was much overcome. She felt as weak as the brakes that were leaning on her shoes. Her money seemed as nothing to her now. She concluded that what Maid Brindle said was certainly true, or else such consequences would never have been. So, quietly and awestruck, she stooped down and hid the national bond, and hurried from the spot.

"Moo," said Maid Brindle, taking some rapid steps after her, then stopping short, with this distinctly uttered caution—"Don't speak of this at home; see that you tell no one where you left the money, or—"

The final of the sentence was unheard; it sounded like a threat, but if so, there was no occasion. Christie was far from being disposed to let any one know of her incredible experience in the grove.

When asked by Hannah to let her see the money she simply declined, and hastened to the parlor. There, on her mother inquiring where her money was, she only replied, "Somewhere," and hastened out to the garden.

By-and-by she came under the window and wanted leave to go to walk. Her mother said yes, but it was most tea-time. Christie didn't care for any supper. Then calling the little dog Cash—very appropriately named he seemed now—she took the path to the grove.

She had been for the last hour or two a hard thinker, and though undetermined what to do further, Christie had decided to see the color of that money again.

The sun had sunk to the hill-top; the grove was dusker than when she had passed through it, but talking to Cash to keep her courage up, she approached the hiding-place and searched tremblingly for the note. It was missing! She looked toward the thicket, and even went near enough to see where the heifer had trampled the undergrowth, but no Maid Brindle was visible now.

To have seen the crystal drops hanging on the ferns by the foot of the oak one might have supposed that the dew was falling so early and so abundantly; I am afraid, however, they were human tears, not angels'. Christie dreaded lest her red eyelids should reveal everything. Still she did not quite

give up the hope that her money might be in its place again next morning, after the wood-nymphs should have carried it through the purifying process.

With this forlorn expectation she found herself at home again, calling Cash through the garden gate.

"Mercy me! what a while that boy is gone after the cows," from Hannah, who had the burden of milking on her pair of hands in Josiah's absence.

"Maid Brindle wont be found with the others," thought the little girl. "There's no telling where she will be found."

But glancing down the road she saw her coming that minute, leading the line of cows. Christie ran into the house breathless, not hating her now, but fearing.

Not five minutes afterwards she heard a powerful rattling of wheels, and saw through the window the hired man driving up at full tilt, standing in the wagon and beckoning to Christie's father, who was in the yard.

"Squire!" he hallooed, "squire!"

"What does the fellow mean by driving so?" muttered the squire, going towards the gate. "Those pigs will be mashed to a jelly."

"They want you to come right down to the store, squire," panted Josiah, seeing the horse out of wind, and believing it to be himself who had run all the way home. "They have got Constable Harris and had him 'rested.'"

"Had who arrested, Josiah?"

"That Luke Bangs, and he's confessed to stealin' Christie's two dollars—told all about it."

"What? What's this about Christie's money?" inquired her father, addressing the family, who by this time were collecting about him. "I've heard nothing of money lost."

Neither had any one save Christie herself, who was shrinking in the background.

The story was this: A great, rough, lazy, lounging, suspicious boy, the property of a widow lately come to the neighborhood, was in the store, skulking under the counter, when the butter was sold, and heard Josiah, who set his life by Christie, as the saying is, tell the merchant all about this being Maid Brindle's payment for the daisy she had eaten.

Learning, too, that the little girl was going home alone through the grove, what does the naughty boy do but sly out and away as fast as his ungainly legs would carry him, to the

squire's hill-pasture! He let Maid Brindle into the grove, climbed a tree, and awaited Christie's coming. When I add that Luko was a ventriloquist, the story is all told.

He went straight back to the store and wanted to buy some candy, a pipe and tobacco, offering the two dollar bill to pay for them. The merchant, besides knowing Luke had no money by fair means, recognized the crispy new greenback just paid to Christie, and compelled the boy to tell how he came by it.

At this point Josiah entered, having been disappointed about the pigs and come back this way for the purpose of taking home a barrel of sugar which was wanted.

It might have gone harder with the accomplished young robber; but he was dreadfully penitent—at least so long as the house of correction stared him in the face—and moreover was going away to sea in his uncle's ship in a few days; and more for his mother's sake than his own, he was let off.

All that I have been telling you happened last year. If I should attempt to describe to you now how large and handsome Christie's daisy is this season, I should fail for want of words; so I will leave it to your imagination. But I beg you will believe that Maid Brindle has never done a speck of mischief since that night, and that she and Christie are very excellent friends. The latter will have it that the clever brute felt sorry that day they met in the grove, and tried to ask her forgiveness for what she had done.

Hannah inclines to laugh at Christie occasionally about the wood-nymphs; but the squire takes his daughter's part, by declaring his belief that the money did go through some kind of improving process, since it succeeded in buying of him what no ten dollars besides could have bought—namely, Maid Brindle's little calf, that looks almost precisely like its mother. So Christie will have a cow of her own one of these days.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

BY M. A. ALDEN.

ONE bright winter morning, Mattie Holden burst into the room where her mother sat sewing, and with flushed face and sparkling eyes, exclaimed:

"Here it is, mother, here it is!"

Her mother looked up smilingly.

"A whole half dollar, Mattie; now what will you do with it?"

Mattie's face clouded a moment.

"It's only a quarter—but I'm sure that's something."

"Only a quarter," said her mother, in surprise. "I thought you said it was to be fifty cents."

"I thought it would be fifty cents, but you know it was my first at—at—my first time—and I got to reading once or twice, and Nettie and Bob sorted faster than I, and Aunt Minna said she guessed my proportion was a quarter, and I was glad to get it and let the old dusty papers alone."

Mattie had been at her grandmother's, helping her little cousins arrange a large quantity of papers and magazines which had from time to time collected in a spare room devoted to that purpose. Mattie had read most of the time so that of the promised fee for the labor performed, her share was really more than just, but Aunt Minna, knowing Mattie's weakness for books, and hoping sometime it would prove other than a weakness in results, indulgently paid her what to Mattie was a sum large enough, although smaller than that justly given her cousins.

"Do you want me to put it in your bank?" her mother asked.

Mattie compressed her lips and shook her head.

"No 'm. I think I should like to buy a doll."

"I would not spend it all for a doll," said her mother.

"P'raps I shan't have to," said Mattie; "but if you will let me I will go and see what a doll costs—such a one as I like."

Mattie's mother consented, and Mattie proceeded to the nearest shop to make her purchases.

She returned in high spirits, and laid

three separate parcels in her mother's lap.

"All this?" her mother said.

"Yes 'm, and two cents over," and Mattie proceeded to unroll her bundles.

"Two dolls, mother, see, I'm going to have them twins."

"But they're not china, Mattie."

"Well, they're just as good, you can wash their faces with butter, and make 'em clean."

"I think one nice china doll would be much better."

"O no, mother; now see the paper one, and see if she hasn't the very prettiest face and the most elegant dresses that you ever saw."

The paper doll was more to Mrs. Holden's taste than the other two, and she strongly urged Mattie to try and make an exchange. But Mattie was intent upon having twins, and dressing them alike, notwithstanding the fact that one of the dolls was shorter than the other, and that one had blue eyes and short hair, and the other brown eyes and long black curls; a fact which Bob and Nettie were not slow in discovering when they came in the afternoon to show the purchases that they had themselves made. Bob wore a new blue necktie vastly becoming, and Nettie was armed with canvas and worsteds, making something mysterious for Christmas.

"Dear me," said Mattie, "why didn't I think of Christmas? Well, I know I can save my paper doll till then."

So she privately showed it to Bob, but would not show it to Nettie.

"And as long as these dolls can't be twins, I guess I'll dress only one at a time."

At her request, her mother then gave her bits of muslin and ribbons, and drawing a table in front of the fire, with Nettie's help she began to dress the doll, while Bob looked on, wishing dolls had never been invented and that "the girls" would play dominoes with him instead. But as "the girls" had no such intention, he contented himself with observing their motions, and making remarks.

"I should think white muslin was rather cold for to-day," he said.

"O well, we're making believe it's the first of May," said Mattie.

"Yes," said Nettie, "and warm for the season. Hand me the scissors, Mat."

"Seems to me Keturah's cheeks are rather red and shiny," said Bob.

"That isn't her name," said Mattie.

"O, what is her name?" asked Nettie, "I never thought to ask before."

"I thought of calling them Violet and Violante," said Mattie, "when I proposed having them twins, but now—"

"I'd call *her* Violent," said Bob, "that's a capital name. Miss Violent in white muslin on the first of May, with pallid cheeks and—"

"Bob," said Nettie, reproachfully, noticing the color rising on her little cousin's cheek.

"Let him make fun if he wants to," said Mattie, "boys always do at anything that's poetical."

"Poetical?" asked Bob.

"Yes, I'm sure Violet is poetical," said Nettie, "and Violante isn't bad in its way—only I always think of 'Violante in the pantry.'"

"That's poetical, sure," said Bob.

"O, it's Violante," said Mattie; "if they had been twins I couldn't have called them those names, so it's just as well."

"And not better too (two)," said Bob, obliged to laugh at his own wit.

"What a bother!" exclaimed Mattie, after a moment's silence.

"I?" asked Bob.

"No, this plaguy, plaguy overskirt!" and without considering results, Mattie gave the table which was a slight stand, easily overturned, a push, and taking advantage of its capabilities in that direction, over it went despite Bob's efforts to prevent it.

Alas, Mattie's doll fell head first against the iron grate, and lay a hapless ruin at her feet.

Nettie looked aghast, Bob sorrowful, and the quick tears sprang into Mattie's eyes.

"Never mind," she said; "now I'm gladder than ever that I got two instead of one. Let's pick up the pieces and dress Erminia."

Bob did not even make fun of this last name, but helped to right the table and its contents, and inwardly resolved that at Christmas time Mattie should have a doll after his mind, and call it whatever she pleased. He was even more resolved in this when in the process of dressing the next doll a leg and an arm came out and a crack appeared in the back of its neck.

Mattie would not allow herself to repine at the spending of her money in the presence of her cousins or her mother, but when alone in her bed at night she wept silently to herself for a while, then suddenly recollecting that Aunt Minna had said there was still a day's more work among the papers, she resolved to try her hand again, to work more industriously, and to spend the money she received in a wiser manner.

Then a thought of the paper doll saved to be given away on Christmas comforted her, and when she woke next morning not a tear lingered in her smiling eyes.

MANDEVILLE.

A MYSTERY OF CALIFORNIA.

BY JOHN CLERKE.

My partners and I had worked diligently, and with tolerable success, through the winter of 1849-50 and the following spring, in the diggings at Coyoteville, and having accumulated an aggregate capital of nearly twenty thousand dollars, we decided to invest it in a mercantile business, which should be managed by two of us who had had some experience in that line, while the other two were to conduct our mining operations, which, though not upon the largest scale, were yet extensive enough to warrant the employment of several hands, when we could get them; for the diggings in those days appeared to be almost unlimited in extent and richness, and men could only be induced to work for wages for a few days or weeks at a time, when they desired to make a stake to enable them to mine on their own account.

It chanced that I was selected to go to San Francisco and purchase a stock; and as stages had not then been placed upon the route, I procured a mule on which to make the trip to Sacramento, whence I was to proceed by steamboat to the Golden City.

I had the good fortune to get a stout hardy beast, and a good traveller of its kind, and, though the gold dust in my saddle-bags, added to my own weight was a rather heavy load for a mule, I made fair progress over the rough mountain trail leading to the City of the Plain. Wagon roads were at that time unknown and almost unthought of in the foothills of the Sierras. The first part of the way was lonely, for the trail wound among the hills away from mining camps and ranches; but the day was fine, and the air was redolent of perfume from the many-colored plume-like chemical blooms, and the pleturesque landscape, clothed in the verdure of early summer, was decorated with a profusion of gorgeous flowers, such as in less favored climes can only be reared by the most tender and assiduous care, but which here testified to the bounty of nature by a rare luxuriance of growth; and the thoughts inspired by these pleasing odors and sights were sufficient companionship for me.

But I was not to make the entire journey

alone. As my mule toiled up a long and steep ascent, I heard behind me the tread of quick hoofs, and turning in my saddle, saw approaching at a rapid pace a powerful and spirited jet black horse, bearing, apparently without effort, one of the handsomest men I had ever seen. He was of medium size, slender and shewy; with clear olive complexion, tinged on either cheek with the ruddy richness of exuberant health and youth; large deep brown eyes, glossy black hair, that rippled in graceful waves almost to his shoulders, and classical features, the regularity of which was relieved by a natty mustache and imperial.

He was clad in a costume much affected by gamblers and fast men in California at that period—a high-crowned, broad-brimmed felt hat, an overshirt of fine brown cloth, richly braided and embroidered, and ornamented with a profusion of small conical gilt buttons, and worn open in front, so as to display to the best advantage an immaculate bosom and collar of snowy linen, with faultless necktie and handsome specimen pin. A sash of crimson silk encircled his waist, from which depended a Colt's revolver of the navy pattern, and a knife of formidable proportions. Dark pantaloons, the lower extremities of which were encased in leather leggings, completed so much of his garb as was visible. The covering of his feet, with the exception of a pair of enormous spurs, was hidden by the immense *tappaderos*, which are usually attached to Mexican stirrups.

While I wondered who and what my fellow-traveller might be, and whether he would deign to give me his company for a part of the way, he came up beside me, and, slightly checking his horse, saluted me in a clear ringing voice and hearty manner:

"Good-day, Mr. Brentford. You have chosen an excellent time for your trip to the Bay. I am going there, too, and we may, perhaps, find each other agreeable company."

I was not a little startled on hearing one whom I had certainly never seen or heard of before, call me by name, and mention so accurately my destination. I looked sharply at

him before answering; but the expression of his face was so frank and agreeable that my half-formed suspicions subsided, as I replied:

"Good-day, sir. You have the advantage of me. If we have ever met before, I cannot recollect it."

"We have not met before; that is, you have never seen me, although I have seen you, and—I don't mean to flatter you—I rather like you."

"Thank you. But how do you know I am going to San Francisco?"

"Easily enough; that was not much of a secret. I could give you, now, if it would be of any use to you, a complete inventory of the contents of your saddle-bags, even to the pretty specimens you have packed so carefully to send as a present to Lizzie Dunbar, but which you will never send to her."

I was dumfounded. How had this man obtained such intimate knowledge of my private affairs? How did he know of my relations with Lizzie Dunbar, and of the presents I designed sending her? Above all, how could he assert with such calm assurance that I would never send those presents? Perhaps he meant to rob me! I looked at him fixedly, to see if I could detect in his countenance any indication of such a purpose. But he met my gaze with such an expression of frankness and good-nature that I was ashamed of my suspicions, while I was awed by a sense of inferiority to this strange and apparently omniscient being, whom I wished to question, but dared not.

"You wonder," said he, after a brief silence, "how I know these things. I cannot reveal to you my sources of information, which extend to even more profound depths than you have yet conceived or imagined. You would ask why you will not send to Lizzie Dunbar the specimens you intend for her. It is because you will change your mind. You will be wrong in doing so, but you will do it in spite of any warning I can give you."

"Pshaw!" said I, with an incredulous smile, though feeling rather ill at ease. "I need no warning, and I shall falsify your prediction, though you seem to be gifted with the power of prophecy. May I ask your name?"

"They call me Mandeville," said he.

Then he gracefully turned the conversation into another channel, and astonished me with a strange and wonderful account of California in the remote past, ages before its soil had been trodden by European feet, or

the Brethren of the Society of Jesus, who first planted the cross upon its shores, had an organized existence.

"Centuries ago," said he, "this region, from the river now called the Columbia to the peninsula of Lower California, was inhabited by a race differing widely from the present occupants of the soil, whether they were Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, natives of Spanish descent or Indians; a race brave and beautiful, amiable and peaceful, wealthy and hospitable, learned in many occult sciences, though without letters, and possessing a certain degree of civilization and barbaric refinement. The earth yielded them its fruits in abundance; the mild and equable climate rendered clothing almost superfluous, and their chief occupations were music, dancing and love. The season of gayety was not confined to any particular time, but extended throughout the year.

"Bodily sickness, care and grief were almost unknown among this people, and death resulted only from old age or accident. They were contented, because their simple wants were bountifully provided for; happy, because they had never heard of sin; yet their lives were useless, for the reason that they had no aspirations above or beyond the condition in which they had continued for many generations. Like the primal man in the garden of Eden before he tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they were contented, and as indolent and sensual as he would have become with no occupation graver than love's gay dalliance.

"But a fearful change came over this later paradise. The earth was rent with terrible convulsions; from hundreds of peaks and fissures lurid flames shot forth accompanied by stones, and ashes, and streams of lava. Mountains sank to the level of the plain, and valleys rose to the height of mountains. The rivers were turned from their accustomed channels; old fountains failed and new ones sprang up; the air was filled with sulphurous fumes and poisonous vapors, through which the sun looked down redly, as in wrath, upon the affrighted people. A large proportion of the inhabitants were destroyed by the earthquakes or died of terror; vegetation withered, and the horrors of famine were added to those of Nature in her awful throes.

"While the convulsions lasted, the people, weakened by idleness and excess of pleasure, abandoned themselves to helpless and hopeless despair; after their cessation, those who

survived, hastily quitted a region which now presented only a scene of ruin and desolation, and journeyed southward. Stern necessity developed their latent powers, and brought their knowledge into practical use.

"Although but a small number survived the perils and hardships of migration, these few, by reason of the whiteness of their skins, the beauty of their features, the dignity and gracefulness of their bearing, and their superior wisdom, were hailed as gods by the tribes among whom they came, and accepted as rulers. They reared the city of the Montezumas, and surrounded it with the triumphs and delights of art, which, centuries later, excited the wonder, and tempted the cupidity of Cortes and his followers. They built the cities of Central America, whose ruins astonish travellers and puzzle archaeologists; and their descendants, as Incas of Peru, were robbed and murdered by the cruel and rapacious Spaniards. The race is supposed to be extinct, but its blood flows today in the veins of living men.

"Generations passed away, and this land, partially restored to beauty and fruitage, was occupied by another people who crossed the mountains from the eastward, and whose degraded descendants are now known as "diggers." They either did not know of the golden treasures which Nature, in her mighty upheaval, had so nearly unearthed and disclosed, or they cared not to seek them.

"The Jesuits, who founded missions in the country, suspected the existence of gold in the earth; but they dwelt near the coast, and were occupied with their work of converting the natives, so that they had neither time nor opportunity, even if they had inclination, to search for it.

"The Spaniards, who from time to time settled in the country, had only a vague idea of its mineral wealth, and did not possess the skill to find it.

"The great discovery was reserved for Americans, whose good fortune is only equalled by their energy, and rare faculty of adapting means to ends. Their success has been remarkable; but their best triumphs are yet to come.

"Before many years the placers will be so nearly exhausted that but few persons can find remunerative employment in them; and agriculture, or other pursuits, which may meantime spring up, will require the services of but a small number of those who must labor in some way for subsistence. The

American genius will be equal to the emergency. Tracing gold to its source, it will discover large veins of auriferous quartz, from which, improving upon the processes used in other parts of the world, it will extract the coveted metal quickly and cheaply. In defiance of scientific dogmas, it will find deposits of the precious metals where mineralogists have declared none could exist, and in combinations before deemed impossible. Its successful researches will extend over a vast space of country to the northward, southward and eastward, and its example will stimulate discovery in remote regions. Its faults are rashness, impatience and wastefulness. In its eagerness to achieve grand results with lightning-like rapidity, it plunges headlong into ruinous enterprises, despises objects apparently trivial but really of great importance, and indulges in lavish and needless expenditures. These errors will long prevail before they are corrected by experience and necessity. Until they are corrected, the mineral wealth of the country will be realized only at an enormous cost."

I listened to this strange discourse, concerning chiefly the unknown past and the unknown future, with interest and wonder. While I was cogitating some appropriate remark, Mandeville, suddenly checking his horse, in a low tone asked me to ride forward. As I did so I heard a peculiar sharp click, which caused me to look quickly around, when I saw that he had drawn and cocked his revolver. Instantly the thought flashed into my mind that he intended to murder and rob me there—the spot, a narrow vale, filled with scattered trees and a dense undergrowth, appearing well suited for the commission of such a deed—and, impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, I drew my own revolver, at the same time wheeling my mule so quickly as to bring him in collision with Mandeville's horse at the very moment his pistol was discharged, but not—as I discovered to my confusion and chagrin—at me. Casting my eye in the direction in which the weapon was pointed, I saw, about seventy-five yards distant, a large buck bound twice into the air and then fall. I believed that Mandeville was fully cognizant of the mistake I had made, but he only said:

"You should not allow yourself to become so much excited, Brentford. You nearly spoiled an excellent shot. Will you assist me to secure the game? We shall relish a part of it for supper."

When we reached the spot where the buck had appeared, we found him already dead. The bull had entered his heart.

The afternoon was now far advanced, and by the time we reached a small mining-camp on one of the tributaries of the Yuba, it had grown dark. Our beasts were obliged to "stake out" to grass, as we were unable to find shelter or provender of any kind for them; but we were furnished rude accommodations for ourselves in a building of a composite order of architecture—being constructed of poles, clapboards and canvas—and containing three rooms, one of which was used as a kitchen, another as a dining-room and dormitory (lodgers being permitted to spread their blankets on the floor), and the third as a bar and sitting-room.

Having supped on venison steaks, fried bacon, biscuits highly flavored with saleratus, and strong coffee, we repaired to the bar-room, where, having obtained a couple of tolerable cigars, we sat down on a rude bench to enjoy them. There were already several men, evidently miners, in the room, with whom we were presently engaged in desultory chat, our principal topics of conversation being the mines, the weather, rich strikes, etc., concerning which Mandeville displayed a degree of knowledge which speedily gained for him the respect of our new friends. Soon another party entered, somewhat under the influence of liquor and rather boisterous. They were led by a rough-looking man of Herculean mould, who advanced to the bar, called for liquor, and in a tone and manner more pressing than polite, invited every one present to partake. The invitation was accepted by all except Mandeville and myself, who asked to be excused on the ground that we had just eaten supper.

"That 'ud be a mighty good excuse arter breakfast or dinner, if a feller was a gwine to work," said the giant; "but arter supper, it wont nigh do. So jest walk up here and take yer lickier like men, and hev no hard feelin's about it."

"We thank you, sir," said Mandeville, "but we do not wish to drink, and positively decline doing so."

"O, yer wont, wont yer?" said the giant, with a fearful string of oaths. "I don't allow nobody in this camp to go back on me, and ef you don't come up to the bar lively and take yer pisen, why, I'll fetch you up, that's all."

"I beg of you, for your own sake, not to at-

tempt anything of the kind," said Mandeville, calmly. "I should not like to hurt you."

The giant burst into a derisive laugh, in which he was joined by those who had entered with him, and stepping up to Mandeville roughly took hold of him, when the latter, springing suddenly to his feet, seized the big ruffian by the collar and a convenient part of his pantaloons, and with scarcely an effort hurled him through the open door into the darkness, where with a thud and a groan we heard him fall on the ground. The rage and astonishment of the bully's friends was freely vented in oaths and exclamations, as they whipped out their knives and pistols. Mandeville coolly remarked:

"You had better put away those playthings and look after your friend. I think he needs your assistance."

His manner awed them, and they slunk away without attempting the violence they had meditated. They stopped in their retreat to pick up their comrade, who, as we learned, was somewhat bruised and considerably frightened, but not seriously damaged.

Two evenings later the little pioneer steamer Washington landed us in San Francisco. We secured quarters at a hotel, and, having placed my saddle-bags with their contents in charge of the landlord for safe keeping, I signified my intention of retiring early to bed. Mandeville, however, who was assigned to a room with me, informed me that he should probably be out until a late hour.

"I have some business," said he, "which will keep me engaged through the evening. Meantime take your rest; and to-morrow we will look over the city together."

I had been asleep perhaps two hours, when I awoke to find Mandeville standing by my bedside with a light in his hand.

"Brentford," said he, "I want a part of your dust, which I will repay to you in the morning. I have made a strange mistake; but the tide will now turn in my favor."

The explanatory part of his speech was entirely beyond my comprehension; but I did not for a moment think of doubting him. I arose, hastily dressed myself, went down stairs, obtained my saddle-bags and gave him the amount he required. He thanked me hastily and went out. I had intended to return immediately to bed, but I observed that the moon was shining brightly, and yielding to an irresistible impulse, I sallied forth for a brief walk. Straits of music from a brilliantly-lighted building attracted me, and entering

the open door I found myself in a large gambling saloon, furnished with a handsome and costly bar, decorated with life-size pictures of classic nudities, and, though the time was near midnight, nearly filled with men, whose attention seemed to be chiefly occupied with one particular table. Elbowing my way with some difficulty through the crowd, I got near this table, and became a spectator of a scene which I watched with more interest than surprise.

The game was faro, and the contest appeared to be chiefly between the dealer and a single better, who was no other than Mandeville. He gave me a slight look of recognition when I drew near the table, and thenceforward took no more notice of me. At first the fortunes of the game were variable, with no decided advantage on either side; and Mandeville made his bets cautiously; but at length the luck inclined toward my friend, and he played high, winning nearly every time, though occasionally losing a heavy stake. I had but little knowledge of the game, but I could readily perceive that in this case the struggle was conducted with more than ordinary pertinacity and spirit, and the placid imperturbability of the antagonists, as they won or lost large sums upon the turn of a card, had a curious fascination for me. The direct interest I had in the game did not cost me a single thought. My confidence in Mandeville was complete, and the possibility that he might lose, and thus, perhaps, render me a defaulter, never once entered my mind.

Fortune at length remained with Mandeville, and his winnings rapidly accumulated until they far exceeded the amount remaining in the bank. Then, for the first time since my entrance, he broke the silence:

"Will you stand a tap?"

"Yes, with a fresh deal."

"How much have you in bank?"

"About fifty thousand dollars."

"Very well. Take another deck, if you choose."

A fresh deck was placed in the box, and the dealing commenced. For several turns Mandeville declined to bet, but at length, placing a chip on the nine-spot, he said:

"I tap you on that card."

The dealer slowly drew the cards from the box.

"Nine wins!" he exclaimed; "and you have broken the bank. This is the second time."

"The second time," repeated Mandeville, "but not the last time."

The crowd, which had, especially during the latter stages of the game, maintained a silence most profound, now grew noisy, and indulged in exclamations of admiration, envy or dislike of the successful player, according to their several humors. The dealer rang a bell and ordered a cocktail for himself and such drinks as they preferred for as many of the bystanders as chose to partake with him. Then, addressing Mandeville, he remarked:

"You don't want to carry that stuff with you to-night."

"No; I shall leave it with you till morning."

"Do you want a memorandum or receipt for it?"

"No; between you and me that is unnecessary."

The dealer summoned his assistants, who removed the money, and Mandeville, turning to me, said:

"A fair night's work. We should sleep soundly after it. Let us go home."

On the following day he placed in my hands, in addition to the sum I had lent him, sixty thousand dollars as my lawful share of the winnings, in consideration of having furnished the stake which enabled him to continue the game, after his own finances were exhausted.

"I am now going down the coast for a while, Brentford," said he, "and we shall not meet again for some months. I have only this to say to you: Never gamble. It is a bad business at best, and you could never win. Good-by."

II.

I HAD intended immediately upon my arrival in San Francisco to place the package of specimens I had selected for a present to Lizzie Dunbar in the express office to be forwarded to the East by the first steamer; but my purpose was delayed by one cause and another, until an event occurred which, as Mandeville had predicted, changed it altogether.

My sudden and unexpected acquisition of wealth, instead of satisfying, only stimulated my desire for more. I resolved to invest the whole amount in merchandise suitable to the wants of a mining community; and, my capital being so largely increased, I was enabled to select a wider range of articles than I had previously calculated upon. I did not much relish the idea of association with partners

comparatively poor; but what I then conceived to be a nice sense of honor impelled me to adhere to the agreement I had made with them, and I consoled myself with the reflection that of course the profits of the concern would be shared according to the amount invested, and that I could at almost any time, after establishing a business, buy out my partners, if I deemed it politic to do so. The expansion of my original design involved, of course, time and consideration. I wrote to my associates, informing them that I should furnish a stock three or four times greater than we had contemplated, and requesting them to secure at any reasonable cost a building of more ample accommodations than the one we had selected for our business. As this would necessarily occasion some delay, I resolved to take a leisurely survey of the mercantile facilities of the city, and watch for opportunities of purchasing cheaply such goods as I thought would be adapted for our prospective trade. In pursuance of this plan, I visited some of the principal merchants, informed them of my means and purposes, and obtained their lowest figures for the purpose of comparing them, in order that I might lay out my money to the best advantage.

Of course, so promising a customer received a great deal of consideration, and courtesies, which were not usual at that time of business bustle and excitement, were freely extended to me. But of all the merchants of the Bay, Henry Wardlaw, a young man of dashing exterior and great energy, paid me the most attention. He chaperoned me to such places of amusement as the city at that time afforded; treated me to wine breakfasts at the *Cafe de Paris*, and, a few days after our first meeting, took me to dine with him at his own house. He was a bachelor, he informed me; but his dear sister, who superintended his household, would be glad to meet me, and he thought he could promise me an agreeable reception.

Wardlaw's house, although—like most residences in San Francisco at that date—small and of plain exterior, was handsomely and tastefully furnished within; and to tread its soft carpets, press its yielding cushions, regard my form and features in its costly mirrors, and admire its elegant pictures, vases, and other expensive ornaments, were luxuries which I enjoyed the more because I had for some time been a stranger to them. But the crowning grace and ornament of the

place was its mistress, Miss Bessie Wardlaw, a beautiful and fascinating young woman of perhaps twenty years, with a self-possession and refinement of manner which could only have been acquired by constant intercourse with the best society. Her dress was calculated to set off her superb charms to the best advantage; and as she received me with gracious cordiality, with a captivating smile and a just perceptible pressure of the delicate white hand she offered me, I thought her the most attractive woman I had ever seen.

Our conversation at dinner embraced a variety of subjects, social, commercial and political, upon all of which she spoke with ease and sprightliness, and with an exquisite modulation of her low musical voice that charmed me. Once or twice I surprised myself in the act of regarding her with a too attentive gaze, and mentally comparing her with Lizzie Dunbar, rather to the disadvantage of the latter, who, I remembered, was simply a pretty country girl, shy, modest and confiding, but of limited social advantages and accomplishments. Once I would not have had her changed in a single particular; but my ideas had expanded with my wealth. If my career continued as prosperously as it had commenced—and I saw no reason to doubt that it would—I could ere long assume a social position second to none; and it was only natural that I should desire my future wife to be fitted to adorn the station to which I would exalt her. I entertained some vague purpose of causing Lizzie to be supplied at my own expense, through the medium of special preceptors and preceptresses, with the graces and accomplishments of which I thought she stood in need. I determined at all events, in my next letter to her, to plainly point out the defects in her manners and education, to which my love for her had hitherto blinded me, but which had now become so painfully apparent, and ask her to make an effort to remedy them, so far as possible. I thought to heal any wound to her sensibilities caused by these suggestions by an extraordinary declaration of affection conveyed in the same letter, and by the handsome presents I designed sending her, but which I had hitherto unaccountably neglected.

I spent the evening with the Wardlaws, and was agreeably entertained by them. Bessie played and sang divinely; Wardlaw was—as indeed he always was—cheerful and brilliant; and under such pleasant influences I yielded myself wholly and unresistingly to

the intoxication of the hour. If Bessie exerted herself to fascinate me, she certainly succeeded. I am ashamed to confess it, but the truth must be told; when I parted from her that night I was madly in love with her. Not that I had forgotten my plighted truth to Lizzie Dunbar—I remembered it but too well, and was base enough to seek in my mind justification for breaking it. Had I remained a comparatively poor man, I reasoned with myself, Lizzie would have made me a good enough wife; “love in a cottage” with her, though tame and monotonous, would be enjoyable; but with my altered prospects it would be wrong toward both of us to place her in a position for which she was so wholly unsuited. With such flimsy pretexts I strove to convince myself that my conduct was not altogether despicable; although I utterly failed to stifle the remorseful pangs which would frequently assail my heart, and almost force me to assert my manhood.

I called the following morning upon Wardlaw in his counting-room, and was greeted by him with energetic cordiality.

“I am glad to see you, Mr. Brentford,” said he, seizing my hand and shaking it vigorously. “Sit down and smoke a cigar with me. I wanted to see you; indeed, if you hadn’t come, I should have gone to look for you.”

“Anything important?” I inquired, carelessly, as I lighted my cigar.

“Yes—rather. I presume you have not yet purchased any goods?”

“No.”

“And your capital remains intact?”

“It does.”

“So far, well. Now, I have a proposition to make to you, and I want you to think twice before you reject it. I frequently engage in mercantile speculations outside of my regular business, and though there is certainly some risk in them, I have found them exceedingly profitable. There is a good thing now on the cards, which I believe has not yet occurred to any one but myself. I have not, however, the funds necessary to take hold of it, and besides, I should want a partner.”

“How much do you lack?”

“From fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars—not less than the former nor more than the latter sum.”

“What is the nature of the speculation?”

“I will explain it to you, trusting, of course, to your honor to say nothing about it should

you decline to go into it. The stock of flour in the city is small, and in the interior it is almost exhausted, but the fact has been strangely overlooked, and the article has not appreciated. One reason for this is doubtless that the ship *Skyrocket*, which sailed from New York for this port in November last with fifteen hundred tons of flour, is daily expected, as she is reported to have been spoken by the last steamer from Panama, within five hundred miles of here, and both wind and weather have since been favorable for vessels bound to this port from the southward. I have, however, accidentally ascertained that the vessel spoken was not the clipper ship *Skyrocket*, but the Danish ship *Skager Rack*, and that her lading is not flour, but German wines and liquors. I have also reliable information that the *Skyrocket* recently put into Callao in a damaged condition, and will require two or three months for repairs. Further, I have ascertained, by careful examination of the shipping records from the Eastern ports, that no other vessel laden with flour may be expected for some weeks. There is none now on the way from South American ports, and the surplus of Oregon is exhausted. It is clear, therefore, that in buying up what there is in market and putting it up at once to double, treble or quadruple its present price, there would be a chance for a handsome profit, while the risk would be nothing.”

“It seems clear enough. But I do not like the idea of speculating in a necessary of life.”

“My dear fellow, it is very plain that you are unsophisticated in worldly matters—you who propose to become a merchant, and to grow rich by trade. Now, I have long since discovered that the only way to wealth is to buy cheap and sell dear, and if conscience stands in the way of a lucky strike, put it quietly aside until a more convenient season. Everybody does it; and if you would hold your own and acquire more in this scheming world, you must do as others do. For my part, I hold that all articles which can be bought or sold come under precisely the same mercantile law of demand and supply, and that it is no more wrong to buy flour as cheaply and sell it as dearly as you can, than it is to buy a house, or a piece of land, or a horse, or a bale of dry goods, for a low price and sell it for a high one. Why is a man gifted with superior foresight and shrewdness, if he is not permitted to use them for his own advantage—and that of his friends?”

My avarice aided Wardlaw's specious reasoning in convincing me, and the result was that I entered almost unresistingly into the scheme. It was arranged that I should make the purchases, as Wardlaw's doing so might excite suspicion, and lead to the partial frustration of our plans. I set about it at once, and proceeded with such despatch that by nightfall every pound of flour in the market had passed into our hands. We immediately put up the price from five cents per pound, at which we had purchased, to twenty cents. A panic ensued, and we soon raised the price to thirty, and eventually to thirty-five cents per pound, at which we closed out the stock. Two days afterward the Skyrocket entered the harbor with her lading in safety, and flour fell to four cents per pound.

My share of the gains from this nefarious transaction amounted to about seventy thousand dollars; and so elated was I with my success that I was easily persuaded to abandon my intention of commencing business in Coyoteville, and join my fortunes with those of Wardlaw in speculative pursuits in the city. I accordingly took steps to break off my business engagements with my former partners, provided myself with suitable lodgings in a convenient locality, and devoted myself to speculation and love; for I had now become a devoted, and, as I thought, not an unwelcome admirer of Miss Bessie Wardlaw, my frequent visits being warmly encouraged by both herself and brother. I had not the courage to write to Lizzie Dunbar and tell her the truth, though my conscience smote me when I looked at her unanswered letters, which for a time continued to reach me with unfailing regularity, telling always the simple and beautiful story of unchanging affection, but ceasing at last with a wail of despair which would have touched any heart less obdurate than mine. Though a dull pain tugged at my heart-strings, I threw those sweet, tender, passionate epistles aside, with a cold criticism upon their chirography and orthography, and sought consolation in the society of my new love, to whom, in my infatuation, I gave the presents I had intended for the old. Yet I never dared to speak to her of love, although I knew that she must have divined my sentiments towards her, and believed that she reciprocated them. A feeling of mingled shame and remorse paralyzed my tongue whenever I attempted to approach the subject.

There were plenty of opportunities for spec-

ulation in those days of change and unrest, when every steamer and sailing vessel that came to the golden shore was crowded with passengers, and every summer and autumn long trains of immigrant wagons poured over the Sierra Nevada, and rested from their long and weary journey beside the rich placers among the foothills. We ventured boldly, and were generally successful. We were occasionally "caught napping," and received a blow which staggered us a little financially; but on the whole we had good reason to be satisfied with the results of our investments. We did not confine our attention to mercantile transactions, but dealt in real estate, bonds and other securities, ditch-stock—everything that offered a good margin for profit; and our gains increased so rapidly that we soon reckoned ourselves millionaires. We seemed, like Napoleon at the summit of his power, to be superior to fortune—to command destiny—to order events. If it is in the power of wealth to make a man happy and contented, I should have been so; but I was not. Surrounded as I was with every luxury that I desired and wealth could purchase; basking in the smiles of the most beautiful woman I ever knew, and who I believed loved me as fondly as I loved her; honored, courted, fawned upon and servilely flattered by all classes, I was yet the most miserable dog alive. I thought there was but one thing necessary to my happiness, but so often as I would have stretched forth my hand to grasp it, the pale sad face of Lizzie Dunbar seemed to interpose itself like an angry spirit between me and the object of my desire.

At this time lawlessness and violence held sway in San Francisco. Murderers and thieves were high in offices under the municipality, and their fellows in crime committed their evil deeds in daylight with impunity. Assassinations, burglaries and highway robberies were of frequent occurrence, and their perpetrators, if apprehended, were almost certain to escape the punishment due to their crimes. Terror at length drove the law-abiding citizens to concert measures in defence of their lives and property, which the law was powerless to protect, and the vigilance committee was formed. I was solicited to take an active share in its organization, but declined, because, as I then believed, legal remedies for the evils sought to be extirpated had not been exhausted. This fact occasioned some ill-feeling against me among

the more active members of the committee, some of whom had perhaps sufficient reason to dislike me, on account of business transactions in which I had been the gainer at their cost.

One evening, shortly after the organization of the committee, I received a message from Bessie Wardlaw, requesting me to call upon her immediately. I lost no time in obeying the summons. I found both her and her brother at home; but, though they received me with their usual apparent cordiality, there was an air of gloom and constraint upon them, and a strange pallor on their faces, which I could not help remarking. Wardlaw was strangely morose and taciturn; Bessie was evidently weighed down by some secret trouble which rendered abortive all her attempts at cheerfulness and pleasantry; and I felt a sense of oppression and dread in the presence of a mystery which I could not fathom. The hours passed tediously and painfully, and I was several times on the point of taking my leave, but was restrained by a meaning look from Bessie, who, I judged from her expression, desired to say something privately to me. At length, during the momentary absence of her brother from the drawing-room, she hastily whispered:

"Thank you for coming. I cannot explain to-night; but to-morrow you shall know everything."

Wardlaw's return at that instant prevented any further privacy between us, and I shortly afterwards took my leave. Wardlaw bade me a simple "good-night," without leaving his chair; but Bessie accompanied me to the hall door, and at parting, as if moved by a sudden impulse, threw an arm around my neck and gave me a passionate kiss, then hastily retreated. At another time such a demonstration on her part would have filled me with joy and delight, but now it only added to my surprise and bewilderment.

Although the hour was pretty late, I felt no inclination to seek my apartments. I was confused by the mystery I had left behind me, and, brooding upon it, lighted a cigar and strolled mechanically up Clay Street to the very summit of the hill. It was a pleasant starlit night, and, sitting down upon a little grassy knoll, I looked upon the city wrapped in stillness and shadow, through which at intervals I could see the gleam of the lanterns borne by the patrolmen of the vigilance committee. I had rested here but a moment, when I was startled by a hand

laid upon my shoulder, and, looking up, saw two men standing beside me.

"Good-evening, sir," said one of them, in a pleasant but strange voice. "Are you fond of the night and solitude?"

"Good-evening, gentlemen," I replied, assured by their appearance and manner that they meant me no harm. "I do not often seek solitude at such an hour, but to-night I am unusually wakeful."

"You have need to be so," returned he. "You know how Judas betrayed his master?"

"I do not understand you," I replied.

"No; because you are blind. But the kiss of a traitress is fresh upon your lips."

"What do you mean?" I cried, starting up in indignation and astonishment.

"I am not at liberty to explain just now. Our present duty, and the object for which we have followed you hither, is to warn and protect you."

"I thank you, gentlemen; but as you are entirely unknown to me, I am at a loss to what motive to attribute your interest in my concerns, or to account for your knowledge of an occurrence of which I am sure there was no human witness."

"You are Maudeville's friend—that is sufficient warrant for our interest in you. The sources of our knowledge we cannot reveal."

The stranger's tone and manner convinced me of his candor, yet I thought there must be a mistake somewhere. Surely Bessie could not be a traitress.

"Is it against Miss Wardlaw you would warn and protect me?" I asked.

"Do not press for explanations now," he answered. "To-morrow you will know everything."

"And meantime?"

"Meantime you will return with us to the city. Hark! there is the signal. The first act of the drama is over, and the second is begun. Let us go."

A bright column of flame shot up through the dim starlight from a house far below us on the slope of the hill. Presently we could hear the sounds of alarm throughout the city; the ringing of bells, the rattling of engines and the shouts of the multitude which swarmed into the streets and surged toward the scene of the conflagration.

"It is Wardlaw's house!" I exclaimed, as the steadily increasing volume of flame brought the building and its surroundings plainly into view.

"Yes, it is Wardlaw's house," said the man

who had hitherto conducted the conversation with me. "Your personal safety is now assured, though you must suffer annoyance and loss."

He descended the hill, and joined the crowd that thronged around the burning house. The fire made rapid work, and in spite of the efforts of the firemen and others who exerted themselves to save it, but little remained of the building when we reached its vicinity. My companions suddenly disappeared, and, in looking around for them I met an acquaintance who seemed to be sufficiently unoccupied to answer a question or two.

"How did this occur?" I inquired.

"Don't know," said he. "It's reported to have been set afire by the murderer."

"What murderer? Where are the Wardlaws?"

"Why, the fellow who killed Richard Wardlaw, to be sure. The corpse was dragged out of the house before it was burned much, and the coroner's took charge of it, to hold an inquest the first thing in the morning. Miss Wardlaw went with the corpse and the coroner."

At the same moment I heard a voice, saying, "There he is—arrest him!" And I was immediately laid violent hold of by two men wearing the badges of the vigilance committee's patrolmen.

"You are our prisoner," said one of them. "You had better come along quietly, for if you try to escape, or make a row to get your friends to rescue you, I'll put a ball through you, sure. Them's my orders!"

"There is a mistake here," said I, with all the dignity I could muster. "By whose authority and on what charge am I arrested?"

"There is no mistake, Charles Brentford," responded the patrolman, with malicious exultation in his tone. "You are arrested by order of Thirty-three Secretary, on a charge of murder and arson. Shall I call a carriage for your worship, or will you go along quietly on foot?"

"I will go on foot," said I, "and you need not use so much rudeness with me. I shall not attempt to escape."

"You'd better not," replied the ruffian; "but I may as well save trouble by keepin' tight hold on yo. A thousand dollars aint plucked up every night."

"Is that your fee for arresting me?"

"That's what the murdered man's sister promised to the patrolman or police that

caught you, and I reckon she'll be as good as her word."

"Does she accuse me of the murder?"

"Well, she does, most decidedly. She seen you do it."

"There is no doubt of Wardlaw's death?"

"Not a mite. You shot him plumb through the heart. You must 'a been putty close to him, for the powder burnt his clo'es."

"And Miss Wardlaw is sure it was I who fired the pistol?"

"I reckon she knows you. She says she heard you and Wardlaw a-jawin', and come to the parlor door jest as you fired the pistol. She was that scared she stopped right there and couldn't speak. Then she saw you snatch some books off the centre-table, and pile 'em up on the floor and set 'em afire, and then run out; and then she come to, and follered you and give the alarm. I was among the first that got to the house; and after the body was drug out I went with her to headquarters and heard her tell the whole story. I reckoned you'd sort o' lay round thar to see what happened, and I got Jim Biles thar to watch around with me for you, and it turns out that I was right. I reckon you'll have to pull hemp, young man, for we don't do things like the old courts. Your money wont do you any good now—onless—" (there he lowered his voice to a whisper, "you can make it count before you're locked up.")

I made no reply. I was overwhelmed by the conviction that Bessie Wardlaw had proved treacherous, and that she was determined to sacrifice me to screen the real murderer. If she chose to swear my life away I had no means of establishing my innocence, except through the two men who had accosted me on the hill; but I had unaccountably lost sight of them, and knew neither their names, residence nor occupation. Perhaps they would come to my aid. Should they fail to do so, my case was hopeless. Would it not be better to purchase my liberty from these patrolmen, and save myself by flight? While I thus cogitated, I saw my unknown friends advancing to meet us. They passed, on without stopping, but as they did so, the one who had previously conversed with me, uttered in a significant tone the single word, "To-morrow." I comprehended its meaning, and thenceforward, though my heart was torn with a variety of conflicting emotions, I felt that I was personally safe.

"We're close to the armory, young man,"

said the patrolman, interrupting my thoughts, "and if you've got any proposition to make, you'd better be quick about it."

"I have none, to make," said I, disdainfully.

"What! aint you willin' to come down with a leetle o' that 'ere kale-seed o' yours to save yer precious neck from a hemp cravat? Seems to me you could shell out right liberal, and have enough left to keep you comfortable. What d'ye say?"

"As I said before, I have no offer to make."

"Then hang, and be d—d to you!" returned the patrolman, spitefully, tightening his grip on my arm, and, with the assistance of his comrade, thrusting me up a flight of stairs. A door opened at his signal, and I was rather unceremoniously ushered into a room, wherein were congregated some dozen or more persons, officers and guards of the vigilance committee, who subjected me to a brief scrutiny, asked me a few questions concerning my motive for the deeds which were evidently considered as good as proven against me, and then, having placed a pair of gyves upon my wrists, gave me in charge of two of their number, who were charged to keep strict and constant watch over me, and hold me safely until called for. I was accordingly conducted to another apartment, where I was offered the choice of a dirty straw pallet, or a rickety chair upon which to pass the brief remainder of the night. I chose the chair—my guards being similarly accommodated. I chanced to have a supply of cigars in my pocket, and, lighting one with the assistance of one of my guards, I made myself as comfortable as my circumstances would admit of. My guards proved to be gentlemanly fellows, who neither asked me impertinent questions nor bored me with affected sympathy. They conversed cheerfully, but not bolsterously, and were ready to pay me any little attention I required. So the hours of my captivity were not altogether miserable.

Early in the morning I was waited upon by a friend, who was one of the executive council of the vigilance committee. He exhibited genuine emotion upon seeing me in such a situation, but was greatly relieved when I assured him that I had no doubt of establishing my innocence. My trial, he informed me, could be postponed for a few days if I wished it; or, if preferable, it could take place as soon as the coroner's inquest, now about to sit, was over. I requested a speedy trial.

Breakfast was brought to me from a restaurant, and, though I had but little appetite for the meal, I fortified myself with a cup of strong coffee, and then calmly awaited the hour of trial. It came at last; and in obedience to an order from "33 Secretary," I was conducted to the hall where the committee's tribunal held its sittings. Three men, selected from among the prominent residents of the city for their probity and intelligence, constituted this tribunal, whose fiat was superior to the laws. They were attended by officers answering to those usually employed in lawful courts, and their appearance and proceedings were characterized by judicial sternness and decorum. A gentleman who filled the place of public prosecutor read the charges against me—for I was to be tried on both at once—and I was asked what I had to say to them.

"Not guilty," I responded, firmly.

"Are you ready for trial?" asked one of my judges.

"I am," was my answer.

"Have you secured counsel?"

"I have not."

A gentleman, whom I recognized as an eminent lawyer, but whose presence I had not before observed, here arose and said:

"At the request of Mr. Brentford's friends, I have consented to act as his counsel on this occasion, provided he makes no objection."

I signified my assent.

"I will undertake his case, then," continued he; "but in doing so, I feel it my duty to enter my solemn protest against the right of this tribunal to determine any man's guilt or innocence, and against the legality and justice of its proceedings generally."

"Let the protest be recorded," said the person who seemed to act as chief judge.

"I have had no opportunity," said my counsel, "of consulting with my client; but I believe I have been placed in possession of all the facts and circumstances necessary for me to know. If there is any point upon which I lack information, it can be supplied during the progress of the trial. We are ready to proceed."

The prosecutor briefly opened his case, and called his principal witness, Miss Bessie Wardlaw. An officer opened the door of an ante-room, and ushered her into the presence of the tribunal. She advanced with a firm step to the witness stand, but she was closely veiled, so that I could not catch a

glimpse of her features. At the same moment, my counsel whispered to an officer, who presently opened the main entrance door, and admitted two men whom I at once recognized as my friends of the previous night. They quietly seated themselves at a distance from the bar.

"Let the witness be sworn," said the chief judge. "It will be necessary for you, Miss Wardlaw, to remove your veil."

She complied, and took the oath, but kept her face turned towards the Judge's bench.

"You are a sister of Henry Wardlaw, who was murdered last night, are you not?" asked the prosecutor.

"I am," she responded, apparently with an effort.

"Turn your face this way, madam, and confront the prisoner," thundered my counsel.

She hesitated for an instant, then obeyed. Her face was deadly pale, and her eyes glittered with a fierce cruel determination. For a single moment she met my steady gaze, then averted her eyes. The examination proceeded, and, briefly, the substance of her testimony was this:

She was the sister of the deceased, and kept house for him at his residence on Clay Street. The prisoner was a business partner of the deceased, and called frequently at the house, sometimes for a friendly visit; had been on friendly terms with her brother and herself; had called last night, and remained until a late hour. After witness had left the room for the purpose of retiring for the night, she had heard loud and angry words between the prisoner and deceased, and returned to the drawing-room with the intention of pacifying them. As she was about entering the door, which stood ajar, she heard the report and saw the flash of the pistol in the prisoner's hand, and saw her brother fall to the floor. So great was her horror that she was deprived for a time of the power of speech or motion. While in this state, she saw the prisoner take a number of books from the centre-table, pile them upon the floor, set fire to them, and rush from the house. Witness then recovered her presence of mind sufficiently to hasten into the street and call for help, and afterwards went with a patrolman to give information of the crime, etc., etc.

My counsel submitted her to a rigid cross-examination, but was unable to make her vary her testimony in the slightest particu-

lar. She positively denied having sent me a special invitation by her brother's manservant to visit her on the previous night, and also having accompanied me to the door upon my leaving. Not more than five minutes elapsed between the firing of the fatal shot and the giving of the alarm.

Mary Caruthers, the servant-girl, was then introduced, and corroborated the testimony of her mistress in many important particulars, making the case against me look very black indeed. Her testimony was an ingenious mixture of truth and falsehood, and she maintained it with undeviating steadfastness, in spite of all my counsel's efforts to entrap her.

"The ladies may now retire," said the chief judge, when the cross-examination was ended. "Does the counsel for the prisoner propose to introduce any evidence?"

"I do, sir," replied my counsel; "and I insist that the witnesses who have just been examined shall not retire. It is important to our case that they remain while our witnesses are being examined."

"Let it be so, then," said the judge; "though I cannot see how your client is to be benefited by that, or indeed by anything else you may do for him. Call your witnesses for the defence."

"Let Felix Bertrand take the stand," said my counsel; and one of my two friends—the one who had been my interlocutor on the previous evening, came forward and took the oath.

The witness testified that he was born in Columbia, South America, his mother being a native of that State, and his father an American, or native of the United States. He had been but a few days in the city, having arrived from Mexico by the last steamer from Panama, which touched at Acapulco. He was acquainted with deceased only by sight, and slightly by reputation; the prisoner he had met for the first time last evening, when, having gone in search of him, in company with his friend and fellow-traveller, Pietro Ledalmon, they saw him leave Wardlaw's house, followed him leisurely to the top of the hill on Clay Street, entered into conversation with him, and remained with him there for fully twenty minutes before the alarm of fire was given. Then the witness, his friend and the prisoner descended the hill together, where they separated, and shortly after, the prisoner was arrested.

"You tell a very pretty story," said the

prosecutor, when the witness had ended. "Now, Mr. Bertrand, have the goodness to tell the court what was your object in seeking the prisoner, Mr. Brentford, at that time of the night."

"To warn and protect him," replied the witness.

"Against what or whom?" queried the prosecutor.

"Against that woman, Bessie Wardlaw," replied Bertrand, in slow and emphatic tones, pointing his finger towards her menacingly, as he spoke, "who had resolved to destroy him and her incestuous brother at the same time, that she might revel in the wealth they had amassed."

"My God, I am lost!" shrieked Miss Wardlaw. And before any one could prevent her, she had drawn a stiletto from her girdle, and plunged it to the hilt in her breast. Mary Caruthers fainted. A scene of excitement and confusion ensued. We gathered around the dying woman, who had fallen to the floor. Bertrand raised her head, supported it upon his lap, and said to her:

"Speak before you die. Have I told the truth?"

"Yes; man, magician, devil, or whatever you are, you have told the truth—curse you!"

And she died.

Mary Caruthers, reviving, confessed that she had perjured herself at the instigation of her mistress, and pleaded for mercy.

As soon as order was in some degree restored, my discharge from custody was ordered, and I walked forth from the dread tribunal a free but miserable man.

A coroner's inquest upon the suicide's body developed no new fact, except that Bessie Wardlaw was *enclente*, and, if the statement of Mary Caruthers could be relied upon, her brother was the partner of her infamy. My mortification and agony were complete.

III.

For days I remained in my apartments, a prey to the profoundest melancholy. My love for the beautiful traitress, who had sought to sacrifice me, as she had her brother, to her wicked selfishness, was completely cured; and in its stead revived my purer affection for Lizzie Dunbar, whom I had so shamefully slighted, and probably lost forever through my folly and infatuation. Willingly would I have abased myself to seek her par-

don and the return of her favor which I had forfeited, had I not feared that she would despise me, and reject my renewed protestations of love with the scorn I felt they deserved. I was too cowardly and too vain to risk the humiliation which my conscience assured me I so richly merited. And so my days passed drearily away in passionate longings, and vain regrets, and impotent struggles with the weakness which was powerful enough to completely subdue me. I would have given all my earthly possessions for the restoration of my peace of mind; but that, alas! is a luxury which gold will not purchase.

At length the very excess of my misery caused it to react upon itself, and in sheer desperation I went forth to encounter the world again. For a time, at least, I would have occupation enough to divert my thoughts from the morbid channel in which they had lately run. My wealth was embarked in a variety of enterprises more or less hazardous, which had been under Wardlaw's management, as I had deferred in nearly everything to his superior sagacity, feeling confident that, notwithstanding his generally lax ideas of commercial integrity, his friendship for me would cause him to deal truly and honorably with me. I now resolved to realize my capital as speedily as I conveniently could, and returning to my Eastern home, endeavor to win back the love I had so wantonly discarded. "Money," I thought to myself, "will heal all injuries—even broken hearts."

Wardlaw had no surviving relative in the city; the functions of the civil authorities were suspended during the rule of the vigilance committee, and so completely was the public mind absorbed in the ever fresh excitement attending that great popular movement, that the Wardlaw tragedy was speedily forgotten, and so long as I remained inactive no steps were taken to administer upon his estate. By the time I was prepared to act, however, the civil courts had resumed their authority; the public administrator was prepared to exercise his prerogative; and at my suggestion he readily undertook the settlement of an estate which gave such abundant promise of rich fees—my duty and interest being to assist him with such information as I possessed or could procure. Having obtained the necessary orders of court, we entered upon the business with the gravity and deliberation befitting its importance.

The only records of our transactions had been in Wardlaw's custody. We were unable after the most diligent search, to find any trace of them. I had recourse to my private memoranda, which, scanty and imperfect as they were, enabled me, with the aid of a naturally good memory, to prepare what I believed to be a tolerably correct schedule of our joint investments; but what was my consternation at finding, upon investigation, that Wardlaw had, some days previous to his death, realized upon all of them, and there was nothing whatever to show what he had done with the funds. His former confidential clerk, armed with conveyances duly signed and witnessed upon the very day of Wardlaw's death, had succeeded to his regular mercantile business, in which I had no interest; but he professed utter ignorance of the deceased's private transactions, and the only enlightenment he could give us was a mere suspicion, which might be well or ill-founded, that Wardlaw had for some time been making large private shipments of treasure to European ports. To be brief, Wardlaw's immense estate dwindled down to the lot upon which his house had stood, while all my wealth, with the exception of four or five thousand dollars in bank to my private account, had vanished into nothingness like the airy creations of a dream.

I bore this new misfortune with more stoicism than I had deemed myself capable of. The worst part of it was the discovery of treachery in him whom I had regarded as my dearest friend; but the pain and disappointment I felt were partially neutralized by other emotions, so that the cumulation of my disasters seemed to afford me relief rather than otherwise. I was aroused to the necessity of exertion, and plans for the restoration of my fortune filled my mind to the exclusion of other cares. Had I squandered it in riotous dissipation, I should probably have sunk nerveless and purposeless into despair and poverty; but its loss through perfidy only stimulated me to fresh endeavors. I determined to return to the mines, and by assiduous industry and careful management, lay the foundation of another fortune.

Felix Bertrand and Pietro Ledaimon had disappeared at the conclusion of my trial before the tribunal of the vigilance committee, and I had not been able to either see or hear of them again. But one day, when I

had nearly completed my preparations for returning to the interior, they surprised me with a visit. I was very glad to see them, for I had not before had an opportunity of thanking them for their generous and timely interference in my behalf.

"We but did our duty," said Bertrand, "and want no thanks. Whoever is under Mandeville's protection is entitled to our services."

"I am none the less obliged to you," I replied; "and if there is any manner in which I can repay the obligation, I beg that you will command me without reserve."

"We are assured of that. Our object is not, however, to claim reward for past favors, but to serve you further. We act under orders from Mandeville, who is now in the city of Mexico on business important to us. He desires us to say to you, that he should have warned you of the misfortunes awaiting you in time to have enabled you to avoid them, but that the experience through which you have just passed was necessary for you, and was furthermore, a part of your predestined fate with which he had no power to interfere. He now sends to you, through us, certain directions which it will be your interest to follow implicitly. In the first place, write immediately to Lizzie Dunbar, telling her the truth; she will accept your contrition, and pardon your offence. Then you will place yourself under the guidance of Senor Ledaimon here, who will conduct you to the spot where new fortune awaits you. He will wait upon you to-morrow at this hour."

Without waiting for assent to their propositions, they took their leave. I felt some inclination to resent the authoritative manner in which they assumed to direct my movements and actions, but, after all, I felt constrained by a power superior to my will to yield to them. I wrote the letter to Lizzie Dunbar, which but for Mandeville's prompting I should not have had the courage to write; made my preparations; purchased a supply of mining tools, camp equipment and provisions, to which I added, at the suggestion of Ledaimon, a quantity of brass ornaments, trinkets, beads, etc., and on the following day took passage with my guide on the little steamer Jack Hayes, for Sacramento. There we procured riding and pack mules, and journeyed northward, following the course of the Sacramento River for three days, at the end of which time we turned our course to the north-eastward, along a

branch of the river, until we halted in a narrow valley at a pretty high elevation among the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. This valley was walled in on either side by precipitous rocks crowned with forests of pine; live-oak, sycamore and cottonwood trees dotted it here and there; the stream which flowed through it, untinged as yet by washings from the placers, was beautifully limpid, and the wigwams of a considerable Indian village lined its banks. We were speedily surrounded by a number of the half-naked inhabitants, who seemed to regard us with a mixture of curiosity, awe and resentment; but when Ledaimon addressed them in their own language, they at once evinced pleasure and friendship, and cheerfully assisted us in preparing our camp, and caring for our animals.

On the following morning Ledaimon conducted me to the gorge at the head of the valley, where the stream entered it, and, pointing out a deep ravine partly filled with huge quartz boulders, cutting the stream at a sharp angle, said:

"Here is the scene of your operations. These Indians will perform all necessary labor—you will only have to feed and superintend them. There is no richer spot in California than this. See!"

He drew from its sheath a long knife, or dagger, which he habitually carried, thrust its point into the dirt between two rocks, and after digging for a few moments, brought forth several nuggets, one of which was as large as a hen's egg, while the others were of different sizes, the smallest being as big as an ordinary pea. I had never before seen such a "prospect," either in manner or richness, and expressed my astonishment accordingly.

"O, that is nothing!" said Ledaimon. "There are larger nuggets and richer crevices here, as you will presently find. Lose no time in setting your Indians to work, as the country is rapidly filling up, and prospecting parties will soon penetrate to the remotest recesses of the foothills where gold is likely to be found. Choose two or three of the most intelligent Indians—there are some here who have lived with the missionaries below, and understand packing and the care of mules and cattle—and make an early trip to the valley for a supply of beaves, flour, tobacco and such other articles as you may need for yourself and your people, who will serve you faithfully so long as you feed them

well and furnish them with trinkets and bright-colored cloths for their personal adornment. I must now leave you, as my presence is required elsewhere; but whenever you are in need of assistance, be assured that one of us will be near you."

We returned to our camp, where he collected the Indians and made a speech to them, which was received with great apparent satisfaction. I then, at his suggestion, distributed some provisions and the trinkets I had brought, after which, through the medium of the Spanish-speaking Indians whom he designated, I perfected arrangements for working the ravine. These matters satisfactorily adjusted, Ledaimon mounted his mule and took his departure.

My Indians of both sexes who were strong enough for the task, labored with alacrity and cheerfulness, and the treasures of the ravine flowed in upon me in a steady golden stream. I took care to supply them with an abundance of provisions, and from time to time made them presents of blankets, clothing and ornaments, so that, while enriching me by their toil, they felt a constant sense of obligation to and dependence upon me.

A little more than two months had elapsed, and, according to my computation, it was time for me to receive a letter in reply to the one I had written to Lizzie Dunbar. To obtain it, it was necessary for me to go to Sacramento, and I resolved to transport thither the bulk of the treasure I had amassed for deposit in some safe bank, and to purchase some supplies I stood in need of. I therefore took with me my entire mule train, in charge of my trusty *arrieros*.

About noon on the second day of our journey, we encamped by a pleasant spring in a grassy dale, for dinner and rest. Having turned out our mules, and partaken of the food which we had brought with us already prepared, we lay down lazily upon the grass, and, as we had arisen very early that morning and were somewhat fatigued, we were soon asleep. Suddenly, however, we awoke, to find ourselves in the power of a party of armed men, two of whom appeared to be Americans and five Mexicans. They coolly informed us that we were prisoners, but that if we gave up peaceably our dust and other valuables, they would spare our lives; otherwise they would kill us at once. Resistance was useless, and we submitted. While some of the rascals stood guard over us with presented pistols, the others began to overhaul

our packs, and quickly, to their great joy and my despair, found my treasure packs. Their further proceedings were interrupted by the appearance of a new actor on the scene, evidently one having authority over the brigands. His face seemed familiar to me; for in form, features and complexion he bore a striking resemblance to Mandeville, Bertrand and Ledalmon; but I perceived that he was neither of these, nor any one else whom I had ever seen before.

"Leave those goods and retire at once," said he, in a commanding tone to the bandits. "You have made a mistake; this is one of our friends."

The fellows who had discovered the treasure pointed to it, and murmured.

"What!" said he; "do you value that paltry stuff more than friendship? and dare you hesitate when I command? Begone, instantly, or by the bright sun above us lie that lingers shall die!"

They hastily departed; and the stranger, advancing with dignified courtesy, accosted me:

"Senor Brentford, I am truly sorry that you have for a moment been annoyed by those brutes. Our brotherhood is obliged to use such tools, and it is sometimes impossible to prevent them from committing blunders. Your way henceforward is clear—I, Pablo Satana, have said it. Farewell." In an instant he was gone from my sight.

We reached Sacramento without further adventure. I found awaiting me there the coveted letter from Lizzie Dunbar, and its purport was such as I had hoped. She freely forgave my error, and, forbearing to upbraid me with it, received me again into her favor. My joy, was, however clouded with anxiety by the information that she with her family was about to journey across the plains to California. I knew something of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered on the route, and I decided to go out and meet the Dunbars with such aid and supplies as I thought they would be likely to require before their journey was ended. I carefully computed the time; and, finding that, even should they start at the earliest possible day, I had still three months to work at my diggings, I returned thither and devoted myself to them with increased assiduity and proportionate success.

Before the time arrived when I should go forth to meet my betrothed, prospecting parties had penetrated to my little valley, and

had staked off all the available ground, except the inconsiderable claim to which I was limited. I had, however, collected the cream of the diggings, and was well content to sell my claim for the handsome price which was readily given me for it. I had wealth enough, if properly husbanded, for all my future wants; but I was not inclined to retire from active life, while all my faculties were yet fresh and vigorous; so I invested it in such a manner that while it would be perfectly secure, its management would afford me all the employment I could wish. Having done this, I made the necessary preparations, and set out for the plains. I employed six trusty men to accompany me, and took with me a train of mules laden with such articles of necessity and luxury as I thought would be welcome to the wayworn travellers.

I met the first of the immigration two days' journey east of the Sierra Nevada; but I did not hear of the Dunbars until I had reached the Sink of the Humboldt. They had been unfortunate, having lost nearly all their teams, and were now moving slowly, on that account. They were travelling almost alone, the families in whose company they had set out having been compelled to leave them behind. I hastened onward as rapidly as I could, and at length found those I was in quest of struggling painfully along, their solitary wagon drawn by a single yoke of oxen, so weak and thin that they seemed hardly capable of supporting their own weight, while the family—fortunately all alive and well—were trudging along on foot in melancholy procession over the burning sands beneath the blazing sun. Our meeting was a joyful one to them, and no less so to me; though I forbear to dwell upon the ecstatic moment when I again clasped my beloved in my arms, and vowed that henceforth nought but death should separate us. We called a halt at the first camping-ground, and at once commenced preparations for transferring the entire party and the remnant of their worldly effects to my mule train, which was ample for their accommodation.

It required some little time to prepare packs, and improvise saddles upon which to mount the Dunbars, and we found it necessary to lie over an entire day for that purpose. While busily engaged in this occupation, we accidentally observed some objects creeping stealthily towards us under the partial cover of the hills; and on closer scrutiny

we discovered them to be Indians—apparently a numerous party, and evidently from their manner, bent on mischief. The place at which we were lying was nearly thirty miles distant from another watering-place in either direction. The parties who had camped with us the previous night had been gone some hours; no other teams would arrive before nightfall. The Indians had discovered through their scouts, who were constantly prowling near the road, our isolated situation, and were coming to attack us. In addition to my party, there were Mr. Dunbar and his two grown-up sons well-armed and full of warlike spirit. Into the wagon, which had been emptied of its lading, we stowed Mrs. Dunbar, Lizzie and the younger children, formed a hasty barricade of our packs and *apparejos*, and put our arms and ammunition in readiness. We had barely completed these preparations, when the savages, with demoniac whoops and yells, poured over the hills and assailed us with a storm of bullets and arrows, which, however, did no execution, as we were well-protected behind our hastily-formed defences. Our return volley was more effective, and caused them to retreat out of the range of our rifles; but they soon returned and renewed the attack, aiming their shots with such precision that two of my men who carelessly exposed themselves were hit—one mortally, and the other so seriously as to disable him. Encouraged by this result, the enemy, with frightful yells, rushed upon us to overwhelm us by force of numbers; but our revolvers now became available, and we used them with such fatal effect that the savages were again driven back. Again they returned to the charge with more desperate fury than before, and, notwithstanding the warmth of their reception, they pressed forward with such obstinacy that it seemed as if we must be overpowered by them, when we heard a distant shout, and, looking towards the quarter whence it came, saw a group of horsemen approaching at full speed. For an instant the Indians paused; but their blood was up, and with frightful howls they renewed the contest, and had gained a little ground, when the horsemen burst in among them, and, with a few volleys from their revolvers stretched a number of them upon the earth, and put the others to flight. As our deliverers rode towards us at the close of the fight, I was astonished to see at their head—Mandeville!

"Just in time, you see, Brentford," said he, as he returned my warm salutation. "Now, let us look to the wounded, and first, let us open that wagon."

We undid the fastenings of the wagon-cover, and assisted the women and children to alight. An arrow was sticking deeply in Lizzie's shoulder, and the bosom of her dress was dyed with her blood; but, though pale, she made no complaint.

"Attend to those poor men first," said she, as I received her in my arms.

"She is right," said Mandeville. "She will bear it bravely. That poor fellow is dying—bring him some water; nothing else will do him any good now. The other will bleed to death if not immediately attended to. Get me some bandages."

In a few minutes he had stopped the flow of blood and bound up the wound of the injured man with the readiness and skill of a practised surgeon. Then he turned his attention to Lizzie, who had patiently reclined in her mother's lap until her turn came. The arrow remained in the wound, he having forbidden any attempt to draw it forth.

"Now take her firmly in your arms, Brentford," said he; "and Miss Dunbar, summon all your courage. These flint arrow-heads are difficult to extract, and some cutting will be necessary; but it will soon be over, and the operation will not require repetition."

He tore away her dress from around the wound, into which he inserted a keen slender blade, and cut slightly on either side of the shaft. Then, producing a pair of long delicate forceps, he introduced them carefully by passing them down upon the shaft until they grasped the head of the arrow, when, holding them firmly, and drawing them steadily out, he soon extracted the weapon entire as it had entered. He then dressed the wound, complimenting Lizzie, who had borne the operation heroically, upon her coolness and courage.

"I wonder, Miss Dunbar," said he, "that you did not participate in the fight. Few men have more nerve than you have shown."

"Ah," she replied, "I have only nerve to suffer—men have nerve to do!"

Mandeville and his companions dined with us, then left us, riding northward.

IV.

SOME months had passed—months of the purest happiness to me, for I had married

Lizzie Dunbar immediately after our arrival in California, and my affairs were as prosperous as I could wish. My business was of such a nature that I was rarely required to be absent from her side; and so much joy did I find in her sweet companionship that I had no inclination to seek other company. It was not, therefore, with feelings of unalloyed pleasure that I received the following;

"DEAR BRENTFORD,—I desire you to meet me in San Francisco on Monday next. I will be at the Crescent City Hotel on Sansome Street.
MANDEVILLE."

Aside from my dislike to leaving my wife for several days, as I must to comply with Mandeville's request, I had a secret and inexplicable repugnance to doing so. Nevertheless, I regarded the note as a mandate to be obeyed, and acted accordingly.

He was waiting for me at the hotel he had indicated, and, on my presenting myself, immediately withdrew me with him to a private chamber.

"Our brotherhood will assemble to-night," said he, "and you must unite with it, no less for your own advantage than ours. You have already proved our power, and your name is indelibly recorded upon our crimson scroll as a friend who is to be assisted in peril at whatever hazard or cost. The time has come when it is fitting that you should affiliate more closely with us, and I believe you will not hesitate to do so, when I assure you that your accession to our order is a matter of very great moment to me, as well as of importance to yourself. You will not object?"

"I do not know. I have but a vague and unsatisfactory idea of the objects of your order, to which, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, to yourself, whom I conceive to be

its chief, I am exceedingly grateful for many good offices. Once I should have joined you without question. Now every step I take involves another, and for the sake of that other's peace and happiness, I must be enlightened as to the character and purposes of your order before I agree to unite myself with it."

"That cannot be, until you have become, body and soul, one of us. You must continue to trust me, as you have hitherto done."

"I am willing to trust you as I have hitherto done, with my life or my property; but my soul I will give into the keeping of Him who made it."

"Bah! how fastidious you are! The most conscientious persons at times are those who appear at other times to be wholly unscrupulous. Now, I could compel you to accede to my request in this matter, but it is a fundamental law of our order that only those shall be admitted to its membership who enter it voluntarily. This much, however, I ask of you: that you accompany me to the assembly this evening for confirmation. If at any time during the ceremony you shall see cause to withdraw, you will be at perfect liberty to do so, and no obligation shall be binding upon you except such as you take knowingly and voluntarily."

"To that I will agree."

"Then meet me here at half-past eight o'clock."

"I will."

He was prompt at the hour, and I passed through the ordeal with firmness and credit. But of that matter I do not wish to speak. From that night I never saw Mandeville again. The last I heard of him he was in Mexico fighting for a republic against the empire.

MANDY'S BOARDER.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

"I RECKON you'd like at the Widder Hall's," said the depot master, in answer to our inquiries for a boarding-place, as we stood on the platform of the romantic little station at Wilmot. "There was some city folks there last year, and they said her table beat the hotel table all holler, and she don't ask nigh so 'much for her 'commodations, neither, as the hotel folks does. There's two Miss Halls in the same house, and they both takes boarders. One has one side of the house, and the other one has 'other. There aint no communication between them, I'll bet, though, for the old lady and Mandy, that's her daughter-in-law, don't hitch hosses at all. Either of 'em 'ud do well enough by you, I s'pose, but if I was in your place, I think I should a leetle rather try the widder, for her tongue isn't so sharp as Mandy's, and her cookin's full as good, I guess. Think you'd like at the widder's, anyway. It's an awful sightly place, and that's what you city folks are generally after. I've got some folks at my house now that do nothing but stare at the mountains till they're all out of countenance!"

"Let's go to the Highland House, and have no more trouble about it, Lou," said Fred, in an impatient undertone. "These New Hampshire farmhouses are not the bowers of bliss that you imagine them to be. They have no blinds, but green paper curtains to give a dim religious light, and keep out the flies and the air, and the carpetless floors are scrubbed until they are so thin that there is always danger of stepping through them into a family of young mice!"

He sounded the word mice in a high key of triumph, thinking that he had conquered me, and it was needless to say mice, as mice are my especial horror.

"Fred," said I, utterly ignoring his rash statements, and determined to have my own way for once, "I have an impression that the Widder Hall's is the very place I have dreamed of, and I am going to take a view of the premises, at any rate."

"Well, I suppose I must submit," said he, with a groan; "but if you wish to 'en-

tertain the tag end of your life with quiet hours,' my advice is to go to the hotel. Ignorant young souls must be taught by experience, however, and I am willing to become a martyr for your sake."

So we sought the Widow Hall's without any further delay, mounted in a creaking old express wagon, which was furnished by the accommodating depot master, and driven by his daughter, a young woman with a pair of very black eyes and a freckled nose, who was even more talkative than her father had been. The animal under her charge was much more sensitive to "whoa!" than "get up!" but she used her whip as briskly as she did her tongue, and by this means we were enabled to reach our destination by noon, though the way seemed endless.

"I shouldn't wonder if Miss Hall opened her heart, and giv us a few of her June apples, to pay for recommendin' her house to you," she remarked, meditatively. "I reckon she aint got no boarders yet. Some folks from New York went up there the other day, but Mandy was at the gate, and she grabbed 'em before they had time to wink. As cute as Miss Hall is, she's no match for Mandy. They say she stands out by the front gate all the whole enduring time, so's to fasten on to everybody that comes along, and keep her mother'n-law from gittin' 'em?"

"Indeed?" exclaimed Fred, in a tone of terror. "Is she dangerous?"

"Wall, no, not unless you get her dander up 'bout something," said the maiden, reassuringly. "You'll like Miss Hall, I know. She's real lively, and a first-rate manager. She'll give you good vittles, and a plenty of 'em. To be sure, she's kinder close, but she wont starve anybody. She's got a good bit of property, and no thanks to her husband, either. He had beautiful learnin', but he was a poor stick for business. She was awful proud of him, though, for he used to write verses, obituaries 'bout everybody that died. He used to write other kind of verses, too, sometimes, and they was printed in the Pineville paper. I tell mother it's a pity he couldn't

a lived until some of our family died, he'd a writ such a long string 'bout us, for if I do say it, our folks is the smartest folks in these parts. My Uncle Ethan's the minister over to Lebanon."

And with her whip suspended in air, she turned to see what effect this bit of information would have on her hearers.

"There's Mr. Hall's grave, now," she continued, in a tone of awe, pointing to a small white monument like an old-fashioned sugar-loaf, which arose from a tangle of buttercups and daisies in a dreary enclosure by the roadside. "Miss Hall turned all her turkeys, and a good part of her stocking yarn, last year, to buy that moniment for him."

"What did she do with her turkeys and her stocking yarn?" I asked, thinking my ears must have deceived me.

"Why, turned 'em, turned into money, of course! We country folks has to turn most all our stuff every year, to get our clothes and things, and that moniment cost a heap. I s'pose such a scholar as he was deserves a moniment, but I reckon he don't feel any grander under it than Nathan Fales does under his wooden slab in the next lot."

"O mighty Cæsar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure?"

repeated Fred, in a highly tragic tone, with his gaze fastened on the monument.

Our driver dropped her whip, and regarded him with mingled curiosity and amazement; then turning, she examined me critically from head to foot. An enlightened, delighted look danced in her eyes.

"Say," she exclaimed, in an excited tone, and with a new deference in her manner, "don't you two b'long to the circus company that's comin' to town next week?"

Fred unhesitatingly assured her that we did, and introduced himself with grave dignity as Monsieur —, the renowned snake swallower; and I was obliged to explain that my brother sometimes went widely astray from the path of truth, and that he was doing so in this instance.

Fred is not yet through college, and his ridiculous pranks are always getting me into trouble.

"What induced you to imagine that we were circus performers?" I asked, trying to choke back my laughter.

"Why, he talks just like that feller they calls the clown does, and I thought your dress looked kind o' fancy." And she flashed a defiant glance at me, that said, "You can't fool me. I know you are circus folks!"

Here Fred roared with laughter, and I began to fear that my short blue mountain suit, with its rows of steel buttons, did look rather fancy, though it was what everybody wore at Mt. Desert, where we had been sojourning for a week or two.

To my great relief, just at this point, our journey was announced to be at an end, and we turned into a green elm-fringed lane, which led to the Widow Hall's door. The foliage was so thick that the house was still invisible, though we knew by the pleasant farmyard bustle which greeted our ears, that we were close upon it. A flock of gray turkeys passed us in grave procession, a hospitable cropple-crowned rooster mounted the fence and crowed us a lusty welcome, a little sparrow sat on the spray over his nest, so near, almost, that I could have stolen him into my keeping, and warbled us a sweet greeting. There was an odor of mint and sweetbriar in the air, and soon the picturesque red-roofed old mansion loomed up before us, with its frontyard full of poppies, and larkspur, and ladies' delights, and rustling lilac bushes. At its back was a breeze-twisted old orchard, in its face the bright river and the dark hills, on one side an upland pasture, dotted with shimmering silver-birches and scented with fern, on the other an infinite stretch of meadows, through which wandered the green lane to the white winding road.

I lingered for a moment on my wagon perch, and took a delighted survey of everything, while Fred, with a ceremonious politeness which seemed to puzzle, almost offend her, assisted our energetic driver in making her horse secure to a moss-covered post. Presently an angular, sharp-featured young woman made her appearance from around the corner of the house.

"Do, Mandy," said the depot master's daughter, with careless condescension. "I s'pose Miss Hall's to home, and we can walk right in, as the door's open," turning to me, who stood expectant in the gateway.

"Were you lookin' for a boardin'-place?" said Mandy, with a bland smile, but placing herself before us in a position which

said, "Stir until I say so, if you dare." "I've got some splendid rooms, and if you will just step round this way, I'll show 'em to you. My part of the house is a good deal sightlier than this."

"Lor, now," said the depot master's daughter, saving us the necessity of speaking, and proving herself equal to the situation, "not knowin' about you and your splendid 'commodations, they've set their heart on trying it a while with the widder. I tell 'em I don't know how they'll like, but they're bound to see for themselves." And she turned to us with a droll smile.

With a bravery which astonished me, I pushed past Mandy's threatening figure, and Fred followed my example with a drooping air entirely foreign to himself. She looked as if she were about to place violent hands on us, but contented herself with a parting thrust, which seemed to be particularly directed to me, as her eyes were fixed on me as she spoke.

"Well," she said, "I hope you'll like solertude, and you'll git it there. Nobody but the minister, an' now and then a bumble-bee, ever darkens that door, nor'll be likely to this summer. I've got *folks* in my part, a rith young man, han'some as a picter, too, but mind ye, none of my boarders is 'lowed in t'other side of the house?" And with this crushing statement, she retired in triumph.

Mrs. Hall was a shrewd, but kindly-looking elderly woman, who beamed upon us cordially, and invited us into the best parlor.

"In sooth, I know not why I am so sad," said Fred, in a doleful undertone, as we entered that sepulchral apartment, which was dark and dismal as a tomb. Every slippery haircloth chair was draped with a white tidy, the windows were darkened by green paper window curtains, and the walls were covered with photographs of persons who must have been in the last stages of consumption when they submitted to the painful task of sitting for the artist. A huge model of Bunker Hill Monument built of seashells occupied one corner, a stuffed eagle, with its wings spread as if for flight, occupied another; and the arm-chair of the late obituarian, with a heavy funereal fold of black crape tied from arm to arm, stood cheerfully in another. Whether this sombre bar was only to keep any unhallowed body from desecrating the

sacred seat of the departed, or was a token of the chair's grief at his absence as well, I could not determine. The whole room seemed to be consecrated to mourning and patriotism, and I was not anxious to remain in it very long.

"My chambers is as pleasant rooms as you'll find anywhere in the country," remarked Mrs. Hall, seeming to perceive its chilling effect upon our spirits, "and so, in fact, is all my rooms but this. This don't hev much sun, you see, and bein' shut up most of the time, it gets kind of damp and gloomy. Would you like to look over the house?"

And we found that she spoke truly. The wide old hall was full of breeze and sunshine, and the chambers were airy, and cool, and delightful, with their white draperies, their plump inviting beds, their quaint, comfortable, old-fashioned furniture, and large lavender-scented closets. Then their many windows on every side looked out on the fairest picture I had ever gazed upon. Fred expressed his approval in a perfect string of absurd quotations, at which the old lady looked as much alarmed and amazed as the depot master's daughter had done.

"There's good trout fishing in the neighborhood, and if you like the place, I suppose we may as well stay here, after all," he remarked, after a little silence.

And watching the route of the capricious little river, one scallop of whose silver skirt was looped up with the daisies to a green bank beneath the window where I stood, I said, "Yes, let us stay, by all means."

The widow received our decision with evident pleasure, and the depot master's daughter, who promised to see that our baggage was sent up immediately, bade us a cordial good-by, and asked us to "step in" whenever we came to the village.

Dinner was served at once, in a cool room decked with asparagus boughs, and it was a dinner fit to set before the king, with its well-cooked meats, its fresh crisp vegetables, and the dessert of wild strawberries and cream. The chickens came and peeped in at us through the open door while we ate, and the tinkle of the cowbell and the murmur of the river made pleasant music for us. We were delighted with everything, and I triumphantly observed that there was ~~not~~ the faintest suggestion of mice in the freshly-painted floor.

The afternoon was spent in unpacking and arranging our rooms, and after tea Fred went in search of a boat, that we might take a moonlight sail on the river.

"You can sit in the window," said he, "and when you see me land on that great rock, come down. There's no way to fasten a boat there, and I don't care to take the trouble to pull it up on shore."

And in obedience to his commands I made myself ready, and sat down by the window to await his appearance.

It was a still dark night, full of sweet meadow odors. The moon had not yet risen, and the stars glimmered faintly through a veil of mist. The grass in the garden below was jewelled by fireflies, and a will-o'-the-wisp, with his glimmering lantern, went dancing along by the river. Presently a prolonged whistle smote the air, and I espied Fred's tall dark figure beckoning to me from the rock.

"What a wonder that he did not call, so that all the echoes in the neighborhood would be repeating my name," I thought, as I hastened down the bank. He seemed to be in an unusually silent mood, helping me into the boat without speaking a word, strangely thoughtful, too, arranging my seat with the nicest care, and placing an old boat-cloak under my feet, for fear of dampness. I forgot in my surprise even to murmur "thank you," and we sailed silently down the river. We slid between wooded banks, through wide level meadows, and dark hills, and the shadow of purple woodlands, then a little village blinked in our faces with its cluster of lights, and just a faint silver edge of the moon tipped the wooded hill at its back.

"How lovely!" I exclaimed, breaking the silence for the first time. "Let us wait here for a moment, Fred; the scene is too pretty to sail away from."

Fred, or the shadow beside me, whom I had fondly supposed to be Fred, turned with a great start, and looked into my face with a bewildered stare.

I was just ready to leap out of the boat, in my fear and amazement, for the face which was looking into mine, and which I could see quite distinctly now in the moonlight, was as unlike the dark sharp-featured one of my brother as could well be imagined. It was a large face, but as delicately rounded as that of a woman. The mouth was hidden by a tawny mus-

tache, and the eyes, which were set under a pair of straight dark brows, were as blue as those of a painted cherub. I was thoroughly bewildered, thoroughly frightened. I thought of the enchanted river in the old fairy-book from whose waters no one ever returned the same. The gray-haired old king who made its voyage was changed into a jolly young hunter. The beggar maid sailed back to her friends a jewelled princess, and by its magic the mild-eyed, discontented prince was transformed into a cruel bloodthirsty bandit. Was this such a river, and had the spell fallen already upon Fred, or was I only the victim of one of his practical jokes?

"Who are you?" I demanded in a tone shrill, tragical, severe.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, after a moment's hesitation. "We have only made a mistake. I see through it all now. You are the young lady who boards at the Widow Hall's, are you not?"

I was by no means sure of my own identity just then, but recklessly nodded in the affirmative.

"And I am the young man who boards in the other side of the house; Frank Herman, at your service," he said, laughing.

Then he went on to explain that he had made an appointment to go rowing with a lady friend; that she had said, "when you are ready, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;" and as I appeared in answer to his signal, and was of the same height and size of the lady in question, no doubt had arisen in his mind but that all was right. He thought it probable that I had made an appointment of the same kind with my brother. I wondered how he happened to know that Fred was my brother, as he met him at the boathouse a short time before. He was very sorry that I should suffer any annoyance, but the darkness alone was to be blamed for the blunder.

I assured him that I had made an appointment of the same kind with my brother, and my mistake was like his own, that he was of the same height of my fraternal relative, and wore the same kind of a hat crushed down over his forehead. I always objected to that hat, and I objected to it now more than ever.

He laughed at this, and it struck me for the first time that there was something funny in our situation, and I joined him.

He had turned the boat, and we were speeding swiftly homeward; but after our little burst of mirth had subsided, we were almost as silent as before. I felt that there was a greater degree of reserve between us than was natural under the circumstances. He was strictly courteous, but not at all inclined to be talkative, and if I made any remark, he listened to me with an air of surprise.

"I suppose you do not intend to remain in Wilnot long?" he said, for the sake of saying something, it seemed.

"Why yes, I hope to stay here all summer. It's delightful, I think, and I am so tired of fashionable crowded watering-places," I replied.

"Indeed! but your—your—party will leave after the performance is over, will they not?"

"I did not come with a party; only my brother is with me. Is the performance to be such a fine affair?" said I, thinking that he referred to the masquerade which was to take place at the hotel sometime in the next week, and wondering why he should call it a performance.

We sailed out of the woods just at that moment, and the meadows were so lovely in the moonlight, with their clusters of silver-mantled elms, and long hill-cast shadows, that if he replied, I did not hear him. I was not very favorably impressed by the young gentleman's manner, and though he might be "rich, and handsome as a picher," was not in despair that Mandy's boarders were not "lowed in the other side of the house."

When we reached the rock from which we started we found Fred there, somewhat anxious over my mysterious disappearance, but inclined to make merry over it when he found that I was safe.

"My whistle also drew a nymph from some secluded shade," said he, "but she disappeared as suddenly as she came when she heard my voice. I should have been silent, and made believe that I was Frank, if I had known how matters stood."

Mr. Herman laughed somewhat stiffly, and I escaped into the house as quickly as possible, having had enough of rowing for one night.

"What do you think of Mr. Frank Herman?" I asked Fred the next morning.

"O, he's no end of a prig," said he, decisively. "I saw him at the boathouse

last night, gazing at the sunset with the most benignant approval. Wasn't struck by his appearance, but thought I'd scrape acquaintance with him for the sake of the pretty girl who belongs to his party; I saw her on the piazza yesterday, but my gentleman didn't condescend, he turned the cold shoulder, decidedly. Some German musician, I suppose," in a tone of contempt.

"I don't like him very well, but there's something remarkably frank and fascinating in his smile," I said, musingly.

"He was not fair to outward view,
He was not nice to see,
His loveliness I never knew
Until he smiled on me,"

quoted Fred, as he lazily lighted his cigar.

"Why, yes, I think he is nice to see, he is certainly handsome,"

"Handsome?" he exclaimed, contemptuously; "he looks like a figure in a pack of cards, with his long light hair and his square shoulders. The moonlight bewitched your eyes, Lou. Hear what my glance has just fallen upon;" and he read aloud from the sensational novel which he held in his hand.

"Many a tender flower of romance has dropped from the rude hand of a mistake. Beware, my sister, beware. Let not thy fancy follow the prince?"

"Miss Gilbert, I wish you'd be kind enough to step into the parlor a minit and see if the stitch in my yellow lamp-mat's like the toilet set you're makin'," said Mrs. Hall, tapping at my door.

The old lady seemed to be greatly interested in worsted-work, and was anxious to imitate some that I had been dreaming over the evening before. I hastened to comply with her request, and while we were comparing stitches and examining tidies, Clary, Mrs. Hall's giggling little maid of all work, with a look of awe in her round eyes, ushered in the Rev. Mr. Perkins, the minister of the parish. He appeared with a face that predicted a funeral, and bowed with pompous solemnity, and when introduced to me the solemnity deepened to severity. I wondered what there was in my appearance that impressed him so unfavorably, for I flattered myself that my demeanor was both modest and becoming. Seating himself in an armchair, he fixed his eyes on that sublime picture which represents the ecstatic meeting of Washington and Lincoln in the clouds, and after an interval of awful silence

cleared his throat and spoke in this wise: "I did not recognize your countenance at our blessed prayer-meeting last Wednesday night, Mrs. Hall."

"No, I didn't feel very smart, so I thought I'd stay at home," said the old lady, curtly.

The reverend gentleman sighed, never moving his gaze from Washington's well-starched shirt-frills.

"And Clary," he continued, his words falling slowly, measurably, like the drip of a cold rain from winter eaves. "I am deeply pained, Mrs. Hall, to mark Clary's falling off from grace—deeply pained that she should avail herself of none of these blessed gospel privileges." And he sighed more deeply than ever.

"Clary, she aint much concerned in her mind, she's young and rather giddy," remarked Mrs. Hall, who did not droop in the least, under this battery of sighs.

"But, Mrs. Hall, is it not your duty as a professor, to warn her against the end to come, to try and gather her into the fold, like a sheep that has gone astray. Induce her to forsake her giddy companions, and come where she may listen to the thrilling voice of the gospel. The barrenest fig-tree may be brought to life by the continual droppings of the sanctuary. However, I did not come here to-day, to speak of this, but on a matter which seems to me to be of like importance. Mrs. Hall, I fear that the smile of the Holy Spirit does not rest on this household," with an annihilating glance at me, as if I were the cloud which that smile could not penetrate. "I would like to speak to you in private, if you please."

Mrs. Hall began to look alarmed, and I made my exit with all possible speed.

Coming down stairs a half hour later, on my way to the woods, I found the reverend gentleman just taking his leave in the doorway.

"Well, Mrs. Hall, I've done my dooty, as a minister of the gospel, I can do no more."

"No, you can't, that's true," said she, in a tone of considerable asperity. "She's a lady, and she reads her Bible, too, and as for him, he's as polite and fine-spoken a youth as I ever see, a little queer sometimes, but nothin' out of the way about him."

I bowed to him, politely, as I passed out, but he only groaned in answer to my salutation, and followed me with dreadful eyes.

When I related the story to Fred, I

thought he seemed more amused than was consistent, for he laughed all day long. He knew who the doubtful people referred to were, even then, but I hadn't the most distant idea.

That afternoon I wandered away into the fields alone, with my sketching-book and an old copy of Jean Paul. The unmown grass was waving lazily in the languid air, the sails were folled on the river, great purple butterflies were floating about in the sultry mist.

It was too warm to work, I felt too lazy even to read; but with my book open in my lap, I settled myself cosily under the boughs of an old oak tree, and let my thoughts wander at their own sweet will. I think I must have fallen asleep at last, for the sky was bright, only for the rosy mist that gathers about the hills on hot summer days, when I last looked up; and now I was suddenly startled by the low ominous rumble of thunder, and found to my consternation that the opposite mountains were hidden by clouds as black as night, and there was every prospect of an immediate storm. I rose to my feet with an exclamation of alarm, for I was fully two miles from home, or indeed any other place of shelter that I knew of. There was a quick rustling in the grass beside me, and to my surprise there stood Mandy's "handsome young gentleman," smiling that wonderful smile of his in spite of our perilous situation. And it was perilous indeed; I never saw such terribly vivid lightning as was beginning to flash almost incessantly from the clouds; it made me dizzy and blind.

"I think you must have been dreaming, as well as I, Miss Gilbert," he said, in his cool undisturbed tone. "I saw you here sometime ago, and when I was suddenly awakened by the thunder I came to look for you, fearing for your safety under this tree. If you will hasten, I think we may reach an old logging camp which I discovered in the woods yesterday, before the rain begins to fall. It is only a few steps from here."

I thanked him, and picking up my books followed him with hasty steps along the narrow hazel-bordered path. The air was suffocating, the birds uttered little shrill notes of fear, and the cattle were lowing dismally in the neighboring meadows. There was an awesome stillness in the air, then great drops of rain began to fall, and the wind rose and shook the trees threat-

cningly. When we reached the camp we were panting and breathless, but not much wet, and the storm was nothing then, in comparison to its fury afterward.

"I hope the rain hasn't spoiled your pretty dress, Miss Gilbert; it looks as if it were made out of one of the most delicate of the clouds," said my protector, with a real anxiety in his look and tone. The exertion he had just undergone seemed to have surprised him out of his stiffness.

It was a pretty dress, though very simple, made of the thinnest and most delicate of gray lawn, and the knot of scarlet poppies I gathered in the fields to wear at my throat was all it needed to relieve its colorless folds. I was always particular about my toilet under any circumstances.

He seemed to have no idea that I might be frightened by the terrible tumult of the elements, though it was such a storm as I never witnessed before or since. It seemed as if the earth must be shaken to its very foundations by the crashing thunder, and the lightning made a sharp glittering line like a sword-blade. He was as cool and composed, himself, as if he were only listening to the gentlest of summer showers; and though I am usually timid in a severe thunder-storm, I was strangely free from fear, then; indeed I was surprised at my own composure, but concluded that it was the contagion of my companion's coolness.

"Do you read Jean Paul?" he asked, opening my book, and regarding me with that half-surprised half-curious gaze, which I had noticed before.

"Yes, certainly," I said; "I enjoy his quaint simplicity more than anything, and you, Mr. Herman, don't you read Jean Paul?"

"Yes," he said, "he admired his writings very much."

Then he began to tell me of his visit to the quaint old village where he was born, of the little old house with the inscription over the door which told passers-by that there lived and wrote the great man.

I had been there, too, and we compared experiences with great interest and amusement, while every moment the storm was growing more severe, and darkness like that of night was creeping into the rude old camp. Then he suddenly seemed to remember himself, and resumed his old stiff, somewhat embarrassed manner. There was a long lull in the conversation, and

looking up, I discovered his eyes fixed on me with that same puzzled, inquiring, half-surprised look.

"Mr. Herman," said I, "is there anything peculiar in my appearance; or why do you look at me so?" I spoke on the impulse of the moment; if I had waited to think, I should have kept silence.

He colored like a girl, to the very roots of his blonde hair. "I beg your pardon, I am very absent-minded," he said, in a confused stammer.

What a relief it was to see a little rift of light through the clouds! The rain was falling in floods still, and the thunder rumbling and crushing, but there was a prospect of fair weather. Anyway, I would go home through it all, if it did not cease soon. Was there ever such an eccentric, such a disagreeable young man? And yet, after all, there was something about him which fascinated me. His manner was certainly very strange.

A rainbow arched itself over the dark sky, the birds began to chirp thankful little songs, and the sun came out and glittered like gold on the wet leaves. Our homeward path was long and decidedly moist, but thanks to the delightful conversation of my eccentric companion, it did not seem long at all, and I was almost sorry when it came to an end.

When we first set out I assumed a stately dignity, and replied to him only in the coldest and briefest manner. I was vexed, and I determined to let Mr. Frank Herman know that I was not going to fall in with his moods so readily. But still he talked on, and there was an appealing look in his eyes when they met mine, which touched me in spite of myself; so, before I was aware of it, I had forgotten my determination, and was chatting to him with all the freedom imaginable. We did not fall into merry little arguments over trivial things, as strangers usually do, but talked seriously and earnestly as old friends might have done. But at the widow's gate the frank freedom of his manner vanished. I looked into his face with surprise, for he was quite pale, and when I thanked him for his kindness in coming to my rescue in the peril of the storm, and bade him good-afternoon, he said never a word but took his leave with an abruptness which was anything but polite. I was both vexed and amused, and resolved to give him no opportunity to

serve me again. I would bow to him if I were obliged to meet him face to face, but I never would speak to him again, never.

Fred laughed until he was almost breathless, when I told him of his strange behaviour, though I thought he would be indignant.

That night Fred and I went rowing on the river, I was singing a fragment of Beethoven's *Adelaide*, that song of songs which the fragrance and passion of the summer night always suggests to me; but I had taken too high a pitch for my voice, and left it hopelessly where the "nightingales keep fluting." A voice singing out of some shadow beyond, caught the strain and bore it along to the end, with rare tenderness and sweetness.

"It's that Herman?" said Fred, in an undertone. "A fine tenor. I shouldn't wonder if he were a professional singer; looks like that."

"How absurd, Fred! I'm sure he looks like no such thing," said I, with more warmth than the occasion required.

"Why didn't you keep on singing, Miss Gilbert?" said Mr. Herman, overtaking us in his light boat. "I thought it was a pity that the remainder of the song should be lost, so I finished it for you, though—"

Fred interrupted him with an exclamation about some shining fishes which he had just discovered in the water, and we all leaned over to observe them; so I was not obliged to speak at all. Perhaps it would have been more polite if I had done so, but I would not.

"We're going down to the cove to hear the band. It's playing at the hotel to-night. Will you come?" said my brother, rather more civil than usual, because of my incivility.

He hesitated, looking at me, but I kept my face resolutely in another direction, and would not speak. Then he suddenly remembered an engagement at the house. We exchanged brief good-nights and he rowed away.

Fred began to laugh with all his might as soon as he was out of hearing, but what he found that was so fun-provoking in the gentleman's appearance I could not imagine.

"Don't you think it's rather strange the fellow doesn't call, Lou?" said he. "He's very much interested in you, certainly. If you are out in the garden, he's always sure

to be at the window. If we go rowing he's seized with a mania to go rowing, too, and this afternoon when you went out into the fields, he saw you go and followed you deliberately, I've no doubt, though he made his meeting you seem like accident."

I bade him keep silence, declaring that I would not listen to such talk, but I was thankful that the friendly darkness hid my face from him, for in spite of myself I was blushing frightfully.

Two days went by, and we saw nothing more of Mandy's boarder; but we heard croquet balls clicking sometimes at twilight, and I caught a glimpse of a coquetish straw hat, from under whose brim a merry girlish voice was continually calling, Frank. For some reason or other, I felt a strange spite against the owner of that voice. Fred declared that she was the prettiest girl he ever saw, but I had only caught a glimpse of a piquant nose and a pair of laughing gray eyes.

On the morning that the circus came to town the country was all alive. As early as ten o'clock in the morning, the farm-wagons began to pour into the village, though there was to be no performance until the afternoon. The buxom country belles came in their finest attire, and a general holiday air prevailed. Fred insisted on my going to the circus; it would be such fun to see the people, he said, and as I had never witnessed such a scene, I consented to go, at last.

Clary was in a state of great excitement, and seemed to be very curious concerning the dress which I was to wear on that important occasion.

"I should think you'd have to do your hair in a more fancy way," she remarked, with the usual freedom of country servants.

It struck me at the moment that her interest was rather strange, but I forgot all about it afterwards.

I noticed that people looked at us very curiously along the way, and just before we reached the tent, I heard a familiar voice ejaculate, "there they are!" Turning round, I espied the depot master's daughter in amazing attire, who rushed forward to greet me with a most cordial handshake. Suddenly mysterious things began to grow clear to me; Fred's unusually excitable state of mind, his half-suppressed mirth were no longer so inex-

pliable. Neither was the minister's private interview with Mrs. Hall.

"Let's wait in this grove a while," said he; "the performance wont commence for some time, and it's so close inside the tent. See, there's the pretty girl who boards at Mandy's, and Herman, and the two other ladies and gentlemen."

"Don't let them see us," said I, sitting down under a large tree, and pulling Fred down beside me.

"We would not have missed coming for anything," said the young lady of Fred's admiration, in answer to a question from a new-comer. "Do you know what a star the company boasts in the person of a young lady performer? A young lady who reads the classics, and sings Beethoven's music in the most enchanting manner. Frank will tell you about her, he—"

I did not care to hear any more, and rising suddenly, with a great deal of bustle, seized Fred's arm to draw him away from the place. As I did so, I found myself face to face with Mr. Herman. He actually turned pale when he saw me, as if I had been a ghost. I was vexed, indignant, mortified. I could scarcely wait to have a little private interview with my scapegrace brother who seemed to enjoy the situation immensely, notwithstanding the dreadful looks which I gave him.

Mr. Herman bowed with the utmost politeness; I bowed with the utmost dignity. Fred burst into a loud laugh.

"Why, Lou Gilbert, is it you?" exclaimed the voice of Fred's young lady, in a tone of bewilderment.

I turned and looked her fairly in the face for the first time, and recognized my roommate, my dearest friend at Madame Dupre's school, Marie Lasell. Forgetting everything in the delight of seeing her, I allowed Fred to escape, and was only awakened to the remembrance of him and his ill-doings by hearing his and Mr. Herman's laugh in a prolonged duet, one voice as merry and boyish as the other. Marie and I had been explaining experiences since we parted, in the most enthusiastic manner lamenting that through some careless mistake we had lost sight of

each other for so long, and declaring that we would never do so again—but now my tongue was stopped. I grew stiff and embarrassed. Marie caught the contagion of my embarrassment.

Mr. Herman and Fred were reading the circus-bills.

"I'd no idea the name of the clown who, with his famous sister, was creating such a sensation, was Gilbert," said Fred, holding on to his sides with laughter; "but when I saw that everybody did me the honor to take me for that merry gentleman, I saw no use in making an explanation."

"Fred," said I, sternly, "what did you tell the depot master's daughter?"

"Lou, it can't be you, who was supposed to be the classical circus performer?" said Marie, breathlessly. "Cousin Frank said the other night he thought there must be some mistake about it."

I introduced her to my brother, who was not slow in making her aware of the state of the case. Marie was always full of pranks herself, and the two got along famously together.

Mr. Herman came over and stood by me. His smile was as pleasant as ever, but I was not ready to forgive him for believing me to belong to a circus company. I wonder why I did not recognize his name before, for while we were at school Marie talked of nothing but the perfections of Cousin Frank Herman.

Long before the summer was over, however, I had forgiven him entirely, and before we left the Widow Hall's I was the promised wife of Mandy's gentleman boarder. Fred had met his fate, too, and I was relieved of a great care, for the amiable and obliging Marie had agreed to take him off my hands, pranks and all. Mandy's boarders were not "lowed in t'other side of the house," but love is always sure to go where 'tisn't "lowed," and I am happy to say that our little romance was the means of uniting the family, and Mrs. Hall and Mandy have concluded to keep house and take boarders together in the future, which will save a good deal of trouble.

MARGARET CONNELLY.

BY CARL BRENT.

CHAPTER I.

A SNOWSTORM.

ALL night, and all day, and all night again it stormed, and on the second morning, although the wind had subsided, the snow was still falling, falling, falling. It fell upon the already almost buried stone walls and fences, on the dark branches and twigs of oak and birch, on the overburdened boughs of evergreens, on the swaying beckoning elms that surrounded the village green; on the roof of the post-office, and the shoemaker's shop, and the schoolhouse; on the black loose shingles, that hardly covered the roof under which the Connells found shelter, and on the slated roof that spread its comfortable expanse over the almost stately residence of the Greshams, where lived the widow of Admiral Gresham. In the summer her sons and daughters came with their families to visit her, and the great rooms in the house and the grounds about it grew alive and jubilant with the merry voices of children. For this winter of which I write, beside the housekeeper and requisite corps of servants, she had with her her youngest and only unmarried son, Doctor Edward Gresham, and a grandchild, Daisy Brandon,

who was to remain with her during the absence of her parents in Europe.

The first day of the storm Daisy managed to amuse herself very well, but the second morning, after she had fed Trott, Uncle Edward's bright-faced Scotch terrier (and this was by no means a short operation, for the poor thing was obliged to speak or roll over for everything he received), and thrown some crumbs out of the window to the snowbirds, and tied a new ribbon round the kitten's neck, and sent the dolls to school, all but the naughty one, which was shut up in the closet, she had come to an end of her amusements, and didn't know what to do. So she rolled herself up in a little ball on the sofa, and began playing with a long string of beads, slipping them slowly one by one through her fingers, and counting them. It was very still, the thick snow wavered before the window, and Daisy fell fast asleep and dreamed a pleasant dream, that papa and mamma had come home and were kissing her, and woke to find Trott licking her face, and Uncle Edward pulling her ear, and O joy! the storm cleared away, and the sun doing his very best to look in upon her through a thick veil of clouds.

Toward the close of the afternoon, while

Daisy and the kitten were having a good romp, there came a ring at the doorbell. All excitement and curiosity to see who had come, Daisy ran into the library, feeling sure that, whoever it was, would be shown in there. She was not disappointed; in a few minutes Margaret Connelly entered the room, or I might have said floated into the room, so easily graceful were her movements. Her figure was erect, her head gracefully *posed* on her slender white neck; and, despite the bundle which she carried, and her dress, which was poor even to shabbiness, there was about her an air of unmistakable high-breeding. Her face was pale, and the thin lips wore a half-grieved expression, but an impatient fire burnt in the blue eyes, rendered unnaturally large by the dark circles about them. She seemed fatigued, and sank wearily into a chair.

Daisy, after the manner of children, endeavored to attract her attention. Margaret watched her movements with an amused smile, seeing which, Daisy took courage and ventured upon a remark.

"Grandmamma will be here in a minute," she said.

"So this is your kitty, is it?" asked Margaret. "What is its name?"

"Patty."

Margaret laughed.

"That is a funny name," she said.

"Yes," answered Daisy; "she is named for the cook, because she found her out in the barn one day."

"So her name is Patty, and yours is—"

"Daisy, Daisy Brandon."

Margaret's lips contracted with a sudden expression of pain, and her eyes overflowed with tears. Daisy had been her father's pet name for her, and this was the first time she had heard it since his death. In an instant Daisy grew sober.

"What is the matter?" she asked; "what makes you cry?" And, with a quick warm impulse, she threw her arms around Margaret's neck and kissed her tenderly.

Neither Margaret nor Daisy was aware that in the recess at the further end of the room sat Doctor Gresham, a silent but interested spectator of the little scene.

In a few minutes Mrs. Gresham rustled into the room, a trig little figure, wearing the thickest of black silk and the finest of lace. She seemed surprised to see Marga-

ret, and scolded her a little, pleasantly, for coming out in such walking.

"I was in no hurry for the work, child," she said. "I shall not let you have any more, if you don't take better care of yourself."

Then she bustled out of the room with the package of work. After an absence of some length she returned, and said to Margaret:

"I shall let Patrick take you home. I have put a bundle for your mother in the sleigh, and it is waiting for you now."

* * * * *

That night, after the maid had put Daisy to bed, Mrs. Gresham, as was her habit, went in to her little room to bid her good-night. When she had given her a final tuck up and kiss, and was about leaving the room, Daisy suddenly called her back.

"Come here, grandma, please."

"Well, what is it, darling?"

"I want to ask you," said Daisy, turning uneasily in her bed, "I want to ask you—do you know—do you think that God takes care of everybody?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Gresham, surprised. "Why do you ask? Haven't you always been taught that he did?"

"Yes," said Daisy; "I know that he takes care of you, and of me, and of papa, and mamma, and Uncle Edward, but somehow—I don't know, but it seems as if he didn't take care of—of the one that was here this afternoon."

"Why, child, what do you mean?" said Mrs. Gresham.

"I thought he took *good* care," answered Daisy; "but Margaret was tired when she came in, and sorry, I know, for there were tears in her eyes. I thought perhaps God didn't think about her, and I wanted to inquire of you if I couldn't ask him to when I asked him for papa and mamma."

"My dear little girl," Mrs. Gresham said, "God *never* forgets. He loves us all with an infinite tender love, and he cares for us always; but if you like to pray for Margaret when you pray for papa and mamma, it is very well for you to do so."

Daisy gave a sigh of relief.

"I am glad he takes care of her," she said, "for I love her dearly."

CHAPTER II.

MARGARET'S HOME.

THE house in which the Connells lived was thin and cheaply built. It had been used for two or three seasons as a summer residence, after which it had been abandoned to the mercy of tenants. It was surrounded by extensive grounds, through which wound a broad avenue, bordered on either edge by young elms and older maples. A line of Norway spruce, closely set above the bank wall on the street, completely hid the house, which stood in a gentle hollow somewhat below the level of the road. The frequent groups of evergreens on the lawn gave in winter an especially sombre aspect to the place. Now their gloom seemed to have lost itself in the white burden of snow, beneath which they bent their beautiful fanlike branches so gracefully.

The sun was setting, and his pale rays touched ever so lightly the whiteness of the landscape, as Patrick urged the strong roan horse through the huge drifts that crossed the avenue. Margaret listened to the light wind that rattled the branches of the elms, and looked at the pure pale gold of the western sky, and there came to her a sensation of some happiness yet to come. Margaret's sister Katrina, a child of ten years, met her at the door.

"O Gretta," she said, "we thought you never would come! Where have you been?"

"Here's yer boondle, mish," said Patrick, handing Margaret a large parcel tied up in brown paper.

Margaret took it from him, ran lightly up the stairs, and entered the sitting-room, a small apartment, but wearing that indescribable attractive expression, which people of cultivation and taste invariably give to their surroundings. Margaret placed the package upon the little work-table, beside which her mother was sitting.

"It's immense and heavy; it will last you for weeks, mamma," she said.

Mrs. Connolly, as she rose to examine the package, displayed a tall graceful figure, and a face whose beauty had been softened and enhanced rather than injured by the suffering of the last year. She untied the parcel, and unrolled a quantity of thick cloth; it was a coat for Daisy. Then there was a square wooden box; she opened it, and found within—not what she had

expected to see, some delicate fabric to be made up—but a clear shaking mould of wine jelly. Katrina clapped her hands when she saw it.

"It's like what we used to have! O mamma, isn't it nice?" she said.

"Mrs. Gresham has sent it for you, mamma?" cried Margaret, in surprise; and on a sudden she burst into tears, and half laughing, half crying, she said, "It's dreadful to be treated as if you really were a human being; I can endure anything better than kindness, I think."

Then she amused them with an account of Daisy and her kitten. By this time Katrina had set the table for tea, or rather for supper, for cold water was all they had to drink, and bread without butter to eat. Katrina nibbled discontentedly at her crust.

"If I only could have some milk," she said, with a sigh.

Margaret looked at her in a troubled way. The face, that should have been round and full, was thin and wan, and the gray eyes, that should have been bright and clear, looked dull and careworn. Margaret took her purse from her pocket, opened it, and counted the contents, hesitated a moment, then closed and replaced it. No, she could not spare even the five cents that a pint of milk would cost.

James Connolly was an Irish gentleman, the son of an Honorable. His small inherited property had been quite sufficient for his bachelor necessities, but when it one day happened that he fell in love and married, he found his income by no means adequate to sustain his position at home. He therefore took his young wife to the continent, where for several years they led a pleasant roving life, spending their summers at some French or German watering-place, and their winters in some obscure town, where the expenses of comfortable, even luxurious, living were comparatively small. By-and-by, when they came to have two children, they found this mode of life less desirable.

Mr. Connolly had often spoken jestingly of emigrating to America; he now began to think of it more seriously, and at length it became a settled purpose, carried into execution as soon as the somewhat reluctantly given consent of his wife could be obtained. They selected New York for their place of residence.

Mr. Connelly engaged in speculations which, for a time, were wonderfully successful. He hoped, in the course of ten years, to amass a sufficient fortune to enable him to return to the pleasant life of the old world; meantime, he gave to his children the best facilities for education afforded by the new.

But there came a time when fortune, that had smiled so brightly upon his first years in New York, changed its smile for frowns; one calamity in business followed rapidly upon another, until at length, utterly worn out by his unceasing and vigorous efforts to stem or turn the tide, Mr. Connelly grew ill and died. From the wreck of his fortune a paltry fifteen hundred dollars was saved to his family.

When Mrs. Connelly and her daughters came to realize the hard fact that they were dependent upon their own exertions for their daily bread, Margaret had said, brightly:

"I must teach music, mamma. Papa paid Steffanoni five dollars a lesson for me. Of course I should not get that at first, not until I have a reputation, you know; but I ought to get a dollar, at least, and I could easily give twenty-five lessons a week. We could live upon that, couldn't we, mamma?"

Inexperienced in matters of business as she herself was, Mrs. Connelly could not repress a smile at her daughter's eager enthusiasm.

"But, my dear, where could you find so many pupils?"

Margaret looked blank, but presently she brightened.

"I could advertise," she said.

It is not, however, my purpose to detail the numberless disappointments that Margaret encountered before she at length decided to answer an advertisement, picked from the "Wants" column of a daily paper, for a teacher, to take charge of the musical department in an academy at Greshamville.

After some weeks of correspondence and waiting, she received permission to undertake the duties of the position for three months upon trial, and, accordingly, the family had located themselves in their three rooms in Greshamville. Margaret received barely three hundred dollars a year for her services in the school; she had, however, several private pupils, and her mother added something to their in-

come by the use of her needle. But their means of subsistence could hardly be considered large, and there was good reason for Margaret to snap the clasp of her portemonnaie and return it to her pocket.

The next morning, either because the walk through the heavy snow had been too fatiguing, or she had taken cold, or for some other cause or causes, Margaret found herself too ill to rise. She was feverish, and her whole body seemed filled with pains. Katrina was despatched for Doctor Gresham, but it grew quite late in the afternoon before he found the half hour in which to answer the summons. Seating himself by the bedside, he studied Margaret's fever-flushed face, and counted her pulse with a deliberate quiet that, of itself, seemed to allay her restlessness.

"Not a severe case, madam," he said, addressing Mrs. Connelly. "I am afraid I shall hardly be able to keep her for a patient longer than a week."

"A week?" exclaimed Margaret, in dismay. "What will become of my teaching?"

"You must let me take charge of that. You have never heard of my musical capabilities, I am afraid," Doctor Gresham said, laughingly, and added: "Come now, don't let your consideration for my vanity prevent your confessing that the noise of my fame has never reached your ears."

"I confess," said Margaret, with a smile.

"Let me furnish testimonials."

He opened the piano, and, seating himself before it, touched the keys with practised fingers. Subdued, soothing, but full chords blended one with another, and from the chaos of harmony a sweet soft melody evolved itself, wavering, floating, rising, sinking, and at last dropping off into silence with an unfinished cadence.

"How sweet! The melody is wholly new to me," Margaret said.

"It is not much known," replied the doctor, turning away from the piano. "I learned it in Germany. I must tell you about it. One evening at Innspruck, a party of students, of which *pars magna fui*, or, in other words, of which I was the eldest and decidedly the biggest, stood on the balcony of the little *gasthof* overlooking the river; these students were smoking, and divided their attention between the light clouds that floated about their mustaches, and the heavier clouds resting in the violet deeps of the evening sky,

obscuring the moonlight. Below them the river wound its gurgling way in darkness. Presently there came a sound of oars, and a boat passed beneath the balcony, filled with peasants returning from their day's labor. They were singing the melody I have just played, and the cadence was broken as they passed out of hearing."

"O," said Margaret, brightening with excitement, "you have been at Innspruck then! I was there when I was a little bit of a girl; scenes and bits of my life there come back to me like dreams. I remember so well the noise of the river, and the singing of the peasants in the streets at night."

Doctor Gresham laughed pleasantly.

"Yes, I have been at Innspruck, so, you see, we are not unacquainted."

CHAPTER III.

ONE afternoon Margaret was returning home from a late lesson. It was one which she particularly disliked to give, as her pupil had no fondness for a study she had been forced to undertake by an ambitious mamma. While the lesson was going on the other children of the family were constantly running about in the room, and she was often obliged to listen to a whispered conversation, in which the shabbiness of her dress was very audibly commented upon, and her mood was by no means an amiable one as she wended her way along the rusty worn path through the snow, which an approaching thaw rendered just moist enough to be slippery. She was startled by the sudden stopping of a sleigh close beside her.

"Miss Margaret, if you will allow me, I will take you home," said the voice of Doctor Gresham.

The expression of Margaret's face changed very perceptibly as she thanked him and allowed him to assist her into the sleigh.

"What could you have been thinking of, Miss Margaret, when I overtook you?" asked the doctor.

"Nothing," replied Margaret, promptly.

"Let me advise you in the future to think of something," he said, laughing, "for the expression given to a face by a mind vacant of thought"—he paused, fixing an amused glance upon her face—"is not altogether charming."

An angry light sparkled for a moment in Margaret's eyes, but she did not speak.

"What has gone wrong?" continued Doctor Gresham. "Did the committee find fault?"

"The committee!" said Margaret, with the slightest curl of the lip.

"Ah! perhaps Mrs. Green was severe, on account of Master Bob's incapacities!"

Margaret laughed.

"Poor little Bob," she said, "he has my warmest commiseration."

"Whatever the trouble is," said Doctor Gresham, "I prescribe amusement; and you must be sure not to neglect your invitation of to-morrow."

"That I certainly shall not," said Margaret, as she ran lightly up the steps into the house, for by this time they had accomplished the remainder of the way to her home.

The invitation to which Doctor Gresham referred had been received a day or two previous, and was for Mrs. Gresham's annual tea-drinking. Margaret had not been into company at all since her father's death, and this tea-drinking was quite an excitement for her. She arrayed herself for the occasion in a dress in which she remembered to have had some very good times, and as she surveyed her head and shoulders in the little mirror, she was well satisfied with the effect of the blue bow against the exquisite silver gray of the material, and she did not discover the old-fashioned laid-away-in-the-draw-ative expression of the whole dress. She was therefore somewhat surprised when, as she entered Mrs. Gresham's already well-filled drawing-room, and acknowledged her few acquaintances with graceful ease, Mrs. Drayton, the shoemaker's wife, wearing the stiffest of cuir-colored silks, not only refused to return her pleasant bow, but screwed up her face, and rolled her little eyes round and round in a vain effort to accomplish a highbred stare, while at the same instant her little daughter rushed forward, and, striking rudely at Margaret's dress, bawled out:

"Yer didn't know as my mother didn't speak ter folks as wore their grandmammy's old cloes, did yer, now?"

Margaret's face flushed with anger and mortification, but she retained sufficient self-possession to accomplish her progress across the room to the spot where Mrs. Gresham stood conversing with one or two more lately arrived guests, and no fault

could be found with the genuine cordiality of that lady's greeting, but she had only a few moments to bestow upon Margaret, other new arrivals requiring her attention, and the former presently seated herself near a window, withdrawing as much as possible into the shadow of the curtain. She watched the various changing groups in the room, listened to the unintermitting hum of voices, the near and distant laughter. Every one seemed happy and pleased; she only was companionless and lonely.

Presently there was a stir at the opposite end of the room. It announced the arrival of Doctor Gresham. As he moved from group to group, greeting the different guests, his eyes roved restlessly about the apartment. At length a satisfied expression showed that his search, for whatever it had been, was rewarded; he recalled his wandering gaze, and gave his whole attention to an elderly gentleman in whom he seemed much interested. Margaret could not avoid a feeling of disappointment; she had hoped that he would see her, and come to relieve her loneliness, if only for a few moments, and she drew further into the shade of the curtain, thinking discontentedly upon the vexations of the afternoon.

Another stir among the guests attracted her attention; a young girl was escorted to the piano—it was one of her own pupils—and she bent eagerly forward to listen to her performance, and smiled in spite of herself when, instead of a labored performance of the much-abused "Mocking-Bird" variations, a brilliant mazurka, really very well played, greeted her ears. Within three minutes from the commencement of the short introduction, the centre of the floor was cleared, and a number of the younger guests were tripping the measure of the music right merrily. She forgot her annoyance, and found it almost impossible not to mark the time with her foot. The curtain near her rustled and shook, she turned her head inquiringly, and discovered Doctor Gresham standing beside her.

"Don't imagine I have just found you out," he said. "I have known your hiding-place for the last half hour, but you seemed to be enjoying it so much that I feared to intrude."

"You are laughing at me," said Margaret, trying very hard not to let the faintest glimmer of a tear shine in her eye.

"No, not much; but you did look the least little bit as if you were thinking of nothing—ah!—a smile—the time is well marked. Will you dance?"

Margaret was only eighteen, and dancing was almost as much a passion with her as music. How she did want to say "yes!" But a sudden thought of her dress forced her to say "no."

"Then I must content myself with hearing you sing. You will oblige me so far, will you not?"

"I shall be glad to sing for you—some time."

"When the dance is finished, then?"

"O no, not now, not to-night. I had much rather not," Margaret said, hastily.

"I cannot be denied; I am impatient; besides, I wish my friends to share the enjoyment with me."

"I will not sing for these people," Margaret said, her face flushing and her voice quivering with passion. "I have no wish to throw my pearls at the feet of swine."

An expression of utter surprise and positive disgust showed in Doctor Gresham's face, and without another word he walked away.

Left again to herself, Margaret's reflections were not of the most charming character. "What have I done?" she thought, bitterly. "He could not know what excuse I had for being vexed. I have disgusted the only friend I had."

She could not keep the tears out of her eyes, and just for an instant she covered her face with her hands. Through the open door beside her came Daisy Brandon. She saw Margaret, and climbing into her lap, kissed her with the ready sympathy of a child, and whispered, softly:

"Don't cry, Miss Margaret, don't cry. God is taking care of you; he is taking care of you always." Then, feeling a little frightened at what she had done, she slipped out of her lap and ran away.

It was becoming intolerable to Margaret to remain where she was, so quietly slipping out of the room, she found Mrs. Gresham, said "good-night," and was soon on her way home.

But she was not to take her walk alone. As she went slowly down the driveway, Doctor Gresham hastily followed her. They walked on for some distance in utter silence, during which time Margaret ceased to feel repentant and became perverse.

"I am very angry with you, Miss Margaret," Doctor Gresham said, at length.

"Indeed!" said she, with hauteur.

"Very much displeased indeed."

"May I ask you what right you have to be either pleased or angry with me?"

"As one of my guests I had a right to expect civility from you."

It was not agreeable to Margaret to be regarded as one of the number of people she had compared to swine. Even in the uncertain moonlight Doctor Gresham could see the angry flush that overspread her face. She attempted to draw her hand from his arm, but he would not permit it, and the remainder of their walk was accomplished in silence.

"The one *contretemps* of the evening was Alice Drayton's rudeness to Margaret," said Mrs. Gresham to her son, as they sat in the library together after their guests had left; "but Margaret endured it admirably, and she looked lovely in spite of her dress."

"Her dress?"

"Yes, it wasn't quite in the fashion."

"And it was commented upon rudely?"

"Yes; Alice said some rude thing about it, but I think Margaret took the remark from whence it came, and had too much sense to be annoyed by it."

Doctor Gresham said nothing, but he thought that a girl of not yet in the twenties might be sensitive as well as sensible; and Mrs. Gresham added, innocently:

"I was sorry Margaret was obliged to leave so early, for I hoped to have heard her sing."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Margaret reached home she would gladly have gone to her room for a "good cry," but instead she sat down and entertained her mother with a superlatively ill-natured account of the party.

Katrina was already asleep. Margaret approached the bed where she lay, and, as she stooped to kiss her, noticed an unusual flush upon her face. At the same moment she turned restlessly, and opening her eyes, begged in a weary sounding voice for some water. Margaret hastened to give it to her, and then taking a fan, fanned her gently until she again slept.

It was perhaps nearly midnight when Margaret suddenly woke to that vague

sense of alarm which it requires several moments of thought to overcome. Before stirring she listened for the sound of Katrina's breathing, but no sound reached her ear; an appalling silence pervaded the little chamber. It was quite dark, and she reached out her hand and felt gently where Katrina should be lying. The child was not there. Margaret sprang up, and lighting a lamp, hurriedly dressed herself. As she entered the outer apartment, she saw that the door into the hall stood open. Katrina must have gone out through it. The house was large, and, except the three rooms occupied by the Connellys, untenanted. Shading the flickering flame of the lamp with her hand, Margaret crossed the hall, and, guided by the doors that stood partly open, passed from room to room, coming at length to the outer door that opened upon the back piazza. This, too, stood open, and as she approached it, the wind extinguished the flame of the lamp. Setting it down with a gesture of impatience, she pushed the door wide open and looked out. Gradually her eyes became accustomed to the darkness; a sound attracted her attention, and turning in the direction from which it seemed to proceed, she discerned Katrina's white-robed figure at the further end of the piazza. With a cry of joy she ran up to her and lifted her in her arms; Katrina struggled, but love and terror gave new strength to Margaret, and she carried her easily through the darkness of the hall, up the bare echoing stairs, and placed her again in bed, drawing the clothes tenderly about her. Katrina threw them off fretfully.

"Let me go! let me go!" she cried.

"Hush, darling, hush," Margaret answered tenderly, and put some water to her lips, which she drank eagerly.

"Mamma," Margaret said, "I must go for Doctor Gresham."

"Alone?" said Mrs. Connelly, in surprise.

Thus brought to think of herself, and the utter loneliness of the road at that time of the night, Margaret experienced an indefinable feeling of dread; for an instant it seemed to her she did not dare to go, but a sudden recollection of Daisy's words, "God is taking care of you, he is taking care of you always," gave her new courage. Although the moon had set, it was not as dark as it had been, when Margaret had looked out in search for Katrina. The

wind had dispersed the clouds somewhat, and the pale starlight made the way easily discernible. Despite her determined efforts to overcome her fear, she was inexpressibly relieved when she reached her destination. Doctor Gresham had been reading late, and himself answered the bell.

"Miss Margaret?" he said, in surprise.

"Katrina is very ill—" Margaret began, and paused to control her voice, which trembled from excitement and the rapidity of her walk.

"Come in," said Doctor Gresham; "I will be ready to go back with you at once."

As they drove rapidly back he said, kindly:

"It was a long walk for you to take alone. Were you not afraid?"

"I did not think much about it, I was so anxious; but I guess I was somewhat afraid, or I should not have been so glad as I was when you opened the door."

"So you had to be frightened into being glad to see me?" he said, in an amused voice; and after that questioned her about Katrina.

Katrina was indeed very ill; the days went by slowly, and Margaret grew to look worn and ill under the pressure of this new anxiety.

"You must give up your teaching for a while," Doctor Gresham said to her one morning.

"I cannot," she said. "I should miss it so, and besides, it is more necessary for me to attend to it now than ever before."

"You must give it up, however, for with your care for Katrina it will make you ill?"

"Indeed, I can endure it. Katrina must certainly be better soon."

Doctor Gresham's dark eyes grew soft with a tender pity as he regarded her.

"Yes," he said, "she will be better—soon—but not in the way that you hope. Katrina is going away from you."

A cry broke from Margaret's lips.

"It cannot be—save her for me—save her!" she cried, passionately. "Do not let me lose this one thing that I love!"

"My poor, poor child," he said, "I had hoped you would be prepared for this. God knows how I have tried to save her for you, how willingly I have made every exertion to do so."

"It is so cruel—so cruel!" Margaret said. And burying her face in her hands, she cried uncontrollably.

After that Margaret gave up her teaching and devoted herself wholly to her sister.

The winter was at an end; already the treacherous softness of the spring blew over the land, and the slow days dragged by. One morning Doctor Gresham brought a tiny bouquet of sweet purple violets for Katrina; she took them almost eagerly and pressed them against her lips.

"They shall be for Gretta," she said, smiling; and then the flowers dropped from the clasp of her weak fingers upon the white counterpane, and she laid her thin hand caressingly upon Doctor Gresham's.

"Don't cry, Gretta; kiss me," she said, "and mamma."

Then the room grew still, and the three watched her quietly; the fluttering breath came less and less frequently, a vivid light overflowed her eyes, burning itself out presently, the heavy lids drooped, the expression of suffering wore out of the face, and in its stead came the indescribable calm and beauty of death.

Mrs. Gresham insisted that Mrs. Connelly and Margaret should spend the week following Katrina's death at her house; a kindness which the two very gladly accepted. Margaret, even in her deep sorrow, rejoiced in the atmosphere of genuine kindness that surrounded her. The time flew by, and at last only one day of the week remained, and what a rainy day it was! Margaret wandered into the library and turned over the loose books on the table in rather a listless way. Suddenly she uttered an involuntary exclamation of delight; she had discovered a collection of familiar German poems. The volume was small, and worn, and travel-stained, but it was the exact counterpart of one that she had possessed when a child. She drew a chair to the table and began turning the leaves of the book, eagerly skimming each familiar bit of rhyme, till at last she came to the ballad of the *Lorelei*. How its one illustration had once delighted her! She leaned back in her chair and recalled an incident connected with it. She—the whole family—were staying near Lake Leman; her papa had been for a few days away, and she had determined to learn this very *Lorelei* to repeat to him on his return. Accordingly, one afternoon, book in hand, she climbed to her favorite seat in a huge

tree near the house to pursue her studies. She had hardly seated herself when a party of students issued from the inn, and approaching the tree, seated themselves on the grass in its shade, and drawing forth their meerschaums, proceeded to make themselves social. The day was warm, and nearly all of them threw aside their hats. A bald spot directly on the head of one attracted Margaret's attention, and as she gazed at it, became more and more interesting and fascinating. She felt that nothing would be easier than to drop her book directly down upon it; so she dropped it; but just before it arrived at its destination, another of the students with a rapid motion of the hand caught it, and very quietly placed it in his pocket. Margaret dared not descend from her perch to claim her property, so of course lost it. Just at this point in her reverie Doctor Gresham entered the library.

"What amuses you so, Miss Margaret?" he demanded.

Margaret related the incident.

"So," said the doctor, "you are the imp of mischief who almost broke the head of my good friend, and I am the man who prevented the crime."

"So, then, the book is mine, after all, the dear thing!" said Margaret, flashing all over with excitement.

"Not so fast," retorted Doctor Gresham. "It is mine by right of possession; you forfeited all right to it when you willfully threw it away."

"No," said Margaret, "it is mine, don't you see? Of course it is mine."

"No, indeed, I can't see anything of the kind," said the doctor.

Margaret reached out her hand to take the book, but Doctor Gresham was before her. A petulant shower of tears was upon Margaret's cheeks. Doctor Gresham dried the tears promptly.

"There is enough of that going on out of doors," he said. "Come, you shall have the book. I will give it to you upon one condition."

"Name it," said Margaret, promptly.

"That you will give me yourself; in which case the book will be mine again, of course."

Margaret laughed, and blushed, and cried; and it presently happened that Doctor Gresham's arm was about her waist and her head on his shoulder, and it also

happened that Trott, bounding into the room some few moments later, was fearfully scandalized at the position of affairs, and barked with such marked disapproval, that before Daisy could follow him, Margaret was standing by one of the windows, looking out intently at the rain, and Doctor Gresham was quite as intently picking up a book near the table.

"O Miss Margaret," said Daisy, "I've found you at last! My grandmamma wants you to come to sing for her, if you will."

"She will come," said Doctor Gresham, with authority. "You shall sing the *A-del-a-i-de*," he said, as together they entered the drawing-room. "I will play the accompaniment."

"By no means," said Margaret, seating herself at the piano. "I will play and you shall sing."

So Doctor Gresham sang, not very well, to be sure, but compensating for faults of execution by the exquisite intonation of the one word *A-del-a-i-de*.

MARRYING A QUEEN.—A SAILOR'S YARN.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

"*THERE'S Madagascar, you see, and here are the Comoros—this one of them is Mohila, and this here is Johanna. Here is where we were at Johanna,*" said Jack, with his finger on the "*Coast Pilot*" lying open between us, on a greasy chest, but incontinently at that moment sliding off into a "*kit*" of boiled beans, as the ship gave a lurch.

Jack was a singular man. He had graduated at Yale College, but was so wild that the clergyman, his father, could make nothing of him, and so the son, taking his own course, went to sea. He had now buffeted the ocean for eleven years, had once risen to the rank of captain, and then, on a flood tide of alcohol, floated himself back to the grade of foremast hand. But we boys thought much of him; for if not a "*father in Israel*," he at least acted the part of tutor, champion and elder brother to the boys of the ship Hoogly.

"Here is where we lay," he repeated, picking up the *Coast Pilot* and wiping off the beans, "*at Johanna. This, you know, was a rendezvous of those old rovers, as much dreaded in the Indian seas as highwaymen were on Hounslow Heath.*"

"Well, fill away, Jack," said Newcastle Ned. "Give us a yarn of some sort, but don't put too much *dic* into it." (He meant dictionary.) "When a man starts a tack, I'm one as wants to know what he's driving at. I came out of Liverpool once in the Patrick Henry. We had the wind to the south'ard, and went down the North Channel, and just before we got off Malin Head, the second mate he says, 'Now, men, we'll commence hostilities;' and there wasn't a man forward that knew what he meant. What was it, Jack?"

"Meant? Why, he meant 'break into the carpenter's chest and steal the tools.' But I can't find you in stories and understanding, too. If I tell a thing, I must use words. You old canvas-backs think of nothing but the *maintop-bowline** and such fixings, and if a man don't string his lingo together with a spunyarn, you can't understand him. Halloo! what's parted now?" he added, as we heard a sound like a pistol

report, followed by a loud flapping noise.

"All hands! Lay up and secure the maintopsail. The weather sheet has parted."

A link of the chain sheet had snapped asunder, but the ship still lay to very well under the mainstaysail, and after furling the topsail, as the gale continued, we returned to the forecabin, to finish our holiday. The harder it blew the better.

"Well, Jack, how about the old-fashioned pirates? What was you saying about them coves?"

"O, don't bother. Never mind what I was saying. I say now I want some tobacco. This is too bad—a whaleman, and not a plug of tobacco in the ship, from the rudder post to that old Hindoo's head under the bowsprit. 'Tis a shame! The old man might have lain in the 'tween decks full, and if we couldn't eat it all, he might have sold it to the darkeys. Are all the shavings gone that we played off the box boards? Well, we've done justice by it—smoked the tobacco and eat the boxes." And Jack turned to overhaul his dunnage, his usual custom on stormy days, singing, as he did so:

"Tell Aunt Rhody, tell Aunt Rhody, tell Aunt Rhody

That the gray goose is dead."

"What in time, Bob, did you haul that bunt gasket so taut for, while my finger was under it? It aches now—this forefinger.

"She's worth saving, sh worth saving, she's,
worth saving,

To make a feather bed."

He was diving deep in his chest. Perhaps some sliver of tobacco might have got lodged in an old shirt, or between the teeth of a dilapidated comb. He tumbled the dunnage over and over—hauled out an old pair of shoes, a shirt with one sleeve, a sailmaker's "palm," a marlinspike, a portrait of the Empress of Austria, a letter from one Angeline Fish—all the while assuring us that the gray goose was dead.

"Come, Jack, heave ahead with your yarn about the pirates. Let your old dunnage alone."

“General Jackson, so they say,
Fought his way to Cana-day.
They s-a-y so, they s-a-y so—

“Halloo old chap! come out here! A hundred and ninety-six days at sea, and one plug of tobacco yet! I'm a jordy else! There's economy for you! Lost and found, old plug, I thank carelessness for thee.

“Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
While our deep plots do pall.”

“Bring on your pipes, chaps! you green goslings and all, that lift up one leg like a cow when anything's said about ‘hoisting.’ Don't you wish yourselves milking now, in your father's barnyards? I know you do. Ah ha! there goes that bean broth again! This sea is getting savage. Two more of the same sort, and then she goes easy again. Always three big seas together, like three cold days, the old he one in the middle! But this dugout will stand it with any clipper-built craft, now I tell you!”

Jack's good-humor had returned. The forecask was blue with smoke, and the old tar continued:

“O, about the pirates—well, they had a spirit of adventure, you know—I never blamed the old villains—such occasional gleams of generosity” (and here Jack came on with the objectionable ‘dic’ again) “that their crimes lose the repulsion attending the deeds of less interesting scoundrels.”

“How are you heading, Jack? You aint talking to the quarter-deck folks of that blasted college you tell so much about. Now put up your helm and square away in plain “sailor;” we don't want none of your shore-going gab. The captain of a college wouldn't know which side of the galley to go to get his grub, in a gale of wind.”

Jack laughed, for he knew where he was.

“No, I don't think he would, Tom,” he said. “He'd toss this bean broth and spoilt beef right over the weather rail, instead of giving it a slide to leeward, as we shall when the old man is out of sight. But about the pirates. The Indianmen of early times used to go through Mozambique Channel, right where we are now, because they knew but little about the ocean to the east of Madagascar. At the Comoros the pirates lay in wait for them—not in boats or little schooners, but in tall ships, mounting forty, fifty and sometimes seventy guns. Culliford had a fleet of thirty-two sail.

“On Johanna, where we lay in the Triton, as I was saying I saw the remains of forts built by Captain Misson, a Frenchman. He sailed in the Victoire. Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest, was said, of all thieves, to have been ‘the prince, and the most gentle thief;’ but Misson might have disputed that title with him. He treated prisoners kindly, and, instead of a black flag, he carried at his mizzen a snow-white ensign. Perhaps the innocence of his flag made the plucking operation less painful. But the Victoire with her broadside would ‘roar you like any sucking dove,’ and whether her ensign were white or black, her cannon balls were hard as an anchor fluke. The Portuguese government sent out five fifty-gun ships to capture the stronghold of this polite rover. In they came, right into the harbor of Johanna. As I stood on the beach, so many years after, I thought how they must have looked, with their full old-fashioned bows and clumsy rig. In they came, and were glad enough to get out again—at least such of them as were allowed that luxury.

“‘Parbleu!’ said the pirate, ‘now we will send these gentlemen to the bottom, if it will be no inconvenience to them!’

“So one fort and then another and another belled out, and the water in the harbor was cut into foam, ships and forts were covered with smoke thicker than this in the forecask. One ship sank in the harbor, another went down just outside, while Misson, manning some of his craft, gave chase to the others, boarded the sternmost and took her.

“We chaps aboard the Triton used to talk a great deal about the gold that we thought Misson had buried on Johanna, and old Bob Garnet said if he could get his share of it he would give up whaling and go into the distillery business. Wherever I went about the island, I thought of gold, gold, gold—

“‘Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl.’

“One day I found an English sovereign away down in a crevice among the roots of a tree. Eureka! but wasn't I made for this world? I imagined there was an oil cask full of the same material down there somewhere, and as I went back to the ship, I thought what I would do with it. I would set up a liquor saloon in New York, drinks free, and give every sailor as much gold as

he wanted. 'What charms, what conjuration and what mighty magic' must be employed to remove a treasure guarded by the ghosts of a thousand pirates, I did not know; but I thought a pickaxe and spade might do as well as anything. But I was determined to make sure of what I already had; so I broke my sovereign, with a good deal of reverence, let me tell you, and got a little tight, I suppose, for when I next saw the sun, two or three days after, I had no sovereign and no hat, and was coiled up at the heel of the bowsprit, away out to sea.

"After a cruise, with no remarkable occurrence—"

"What do you mean by 'markable currents,' Jack? You didn't expect to strike the Gulf Stream away over towards the Moluccas, did you? Yer gettin' too 'igh, Jack—take in yer royals."

"O, you mouse your jaw, Tom. As I was saying, nothing turned up except that we had a boat thrown as high as the ship's lower yards, by an old whale in the Strait of Sunda, and after a time we came back to the westward. We anchored on the Madagascar coast, and there, for the first time in my life, I saw a queen. You know who she is—the sailors call her the Queen of Madagascar. She was a good-looking yellow girl, all covered with diamonds."

"Yellow, d'ye say, Jack? Now that's a go! We had a fellow aboard the Chariot that we picked up on the island, and if you had bolled him down in tar it would have made him white. He had such a knotty head that we used to set him for a trap in the hold, to catch rats in his wool."

"O well, Bill, you got hold of a nigger—they are half negroes and half Malays—but the queen is descended from Captain Nathaniel North, an English rover. His professional career was more successful than Kidd's, inasmuch as Captain North did not die with his shoes on. He overran a part of Madagascar, married a princess, and having already acquired a competence by forced loans from the East India Company, he retired from business, like a sensible man, who knows when he has got enough. Pirate or not, he made an excellent king."

"The queen had a great train with her, and at a little distance she had an army sixteen thousand strong. But she was not married, and I thought what a chance for a man with my expectations, with an oil cask full of gold waiting my pleasure at

Johanna! She admired white men—I could see that. She wanted a husband that should do no discredit to the fame of her ancestor, who was a sailor like myself. She looked very well, as I was saying, and besides, she knew how to make a kind of liquor that a man could get tipsy on. I knew that, for I tried it. Well, one way and another it came around, and I married her."

"Now, Jack, is that the truth?"

"Of course 'tis. You should have seen me dressed up in my finery. I was a big man, and all hands and the skipper of the Triton had to stand clear. He wanted me to go aboard the ship again; but I threatened to make a state prisoner of him if he didn't clear out, and he was afraid of me."

"There's such divinity doth hedge a king."

"I suppose," said old Ben, "you felt as a native does when he gets on a hat and one boot. Then he comes down to the ship, and says, 'No swear at me no more; I big man!'"

"But the queen wanted money," continued Jack. "No one is ever satisfied. She told me that her ancestor, Captain North, had buried treasure on Johanna; so in the first year of Jack King of Madagascar, I proposed that we should go in search of it. We went over in a big canoe, with ever so many natives, and a great deal of 'pomp and circumstance'—the chief circumstance being that our canoe was upset, and all our digging implements lost. Her majesty swam like a duck, and took me in tow; but we were pretty close to the shore. After landing we had nothing to dig with; so I went over to the harbor, leaving my wife in the woods. What should I see but my old ship, that having made another cruise had put in here, and was now ready for sea again? I saw the skipper ashore, but gave him a wide berth, because I knew he would try to get me, if only to show that he could do it. Then I dropped into a little Portuguese shanty and took a nip of bad rum, and then I took another; and when I had taken seven or eight horns, I lost all moderation and began to drink. My thoughts grew confused at last, and I went out doors, walking as a top does when it has almost done spinning; and pretty soon away I sidled, first making leeway and then sternway, till the ground started right up to my nose, and I leaned against it and went to sleep."

The old tars concealed their envy with approving grins; and just then a chopping sea thundering against the Hoogly's bow, unseated Jack from his chest and mixed him handsomely with beans that swashed up as high as the lee berth boards. But he gathered himself up with some remarks that would seem indecorous in my narrative, and wiping his duck trousers with his broad palm, continued his story.

"Blast the shark swill! where was I? O, drunk. Well, I must have slept a good while, for when I awoke, the Portuguese shanty was gone. The wind roared, the rain came down as if somebody had ripped a cloud open with a sheath knife, and I heard sails flapping. Then a voice sang out, 'Clew up to gallant sails! Haul up the courses! Settle the topsail yards down on the caps!' and I knew where I was. It was the voice of my old captain, and the ship was wallowing along in a squall. What had become of my royal consort I did not know; but I knew that my head ached.

"The skipper came stirring me up pretty soon, and I turned to with my watch. The ship had made a miserable voyage, I was in debt to her, almost everybody had run away, and the old man wanted me to help work her home. But I made myself as useless as possible, so that he threatened me with a rope's end. Think of that—and I a king! 'Our eyrie buildeth in the cedar's top,' said I; 'so clear out with your rope's end, or you'll repent it!'

"I suppose he thought I meant to prosecute him for ill treatment when we should get home, for he yelled out:

"'I don't care if we are most home; I'd whip you if Montauk light was bearing sou'west from me!'

"And at me he came. He knocked me against the mainmast, and I knocked him against the break of the poop. After a dozen ups and downs on each side, we both hauled off and backed our yards, to consider the matter.

"'Put him in irons, sir?' asked the mate.

"'No sir!' roared the skipper. 'No, Mr. Seawolf, no man that I can't lick shall be

put in irons with my consent. Go forward, Jack.'

"And from that day, the captain was a true friend to me. But I don't want to go with him again. He had taken on board a great lot of squashes at Johanna, and kept us on squash soup all the passage home—squash soup, squash soup, every day.

"I still believe there was gold under that tree; but whether or not the queen found it, or how she got home, I never knew. But I say, mates, this gale lulls. Halloo, there it is—relieve the wheel—two bells—my trick!" And Jack went aft, to his duty; for both watches had been below during the gale.

"Lay up, some of you, and bend this new sheet. Loose fore and mizzen topails—don't shake the reefs out." And soon the ship was under headway.

"Ah," said Galway Mike, as we were bending the sheet to the clew of the main-top-sail, "the Jlar that old Jack is! It bates me."

But Jack had not lied. Three days later we dropped anchor on the coast of Madagascar, and learned that the queen, with a large retinue, was near by. Jack immediately started in quest of her, accompanied by the whole starboard watch of the ship Hoogly. We saw her, and my surprise was great. "Looks very well—a common-looking yellow girl," quotha! She was a beautiful quadroom. True, she had "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun," but it was no muddy yellow. The rich blood burned in lip and cheek, and sweetness was impressed on all her features. At sight of Jack, she came gracefully towards him, and the joy of the meeting seemed mutual.

She had found the gold and brought it safely to Madagascar, together with a casket containing evidence, which Jack read, that the treasure had once been the property of Captain North. Jack was now rich. She invited him to share the sovereignty of the island, and he was a king. "Frailty, thy name is woman!" was my mental comment, as I returned to the ship; "or the love of woman would not so often fall upon unworthy objects."

MASKED BATTERIES.

Dale, Dora

Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Dec 1870; 32, 6; American Periodicals

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MASKED BATTERIES.

BY DORA DALE.

YES, he loved her—dearly!

He had done some mad things before in the course of his life, and yet, I think, never any that seemed to him so utterly insane as this. He sat quietly on the piazza of the Clarendon, puffing away at his cigar, pretending to himself that he was making up his betting-book for the next day's races, but all the time seeing a lovely fair face, and the entrancing winning smile of a pair of deep violet eyes.

He was an odd fellow, and yet, with all his eccentricities, I know no one who possessed more friends than Erroll Courtayne. You would hardly call him a handsome man—his features were too irregular—yet there was something better than beauty in his high white forehead and frank brown eyes that always met yours so fearlessly, and a fascina-

tion in his low tones and gentle courtly manners that was felt by men as well as women. He had been a good deal of a wanderer; Paris, London and Vienna knew him almost as well as New York and Philadelphia, and rumor had bestowed his hand and affections upon the different beauties of a dozen seasons; but, notwithstanding, he came back to America, feeling that it was good to be at home again with an untouched heart. Perhaps he rather prided himself upon his extra fastidiousness, and, therefore, it was something of a shock when he discovered that his safeguards had fallen at one blow—gone down like a house of cards under the soft white hand of Cecil Adair.

Courtayne had met her first at Harewood, that dangerous hotbed of the *dolce-far-niente*, where more flirtations budded, and then blos-

somed into engagements, than at any other country-seat in the State. Beautiful Ida Lechmere knew so well what elements promoted harmony that she avoided discords by a species of clairvoyance, and you were sure of meeting only the most charming and delightful people in the mansion of which she was *châtelaine*. Cecil and she had been friends from their earliest girlhood, and perhaps their affection for each other was all the more sincere because they never raved about it, after the manner of gushing women. And Mrs. Lechmere knew just what a favor she was doing Cecil when she invited her for a fortnight at Harewood, without including Mrs. Meredith and Tina.

Cecil was an orphan, and had been left under the guardianship of her father's only sister, a wealthy widow, with one daughter. A clever, scheming woman, though of fiery temper, she kept upon good terms with Cecil only because of what the world would say did she cast her off—for Cecil, just now, was a reigning belle, and Tina Meredith's little candle had been extinguished in the blaze of her cousin's success. We called her "the Refuser," after the heroine of one of Laurence's novels; I think that even that transcendent personage had not a larger list of killed and wounded. And Cecil carried such a charm with her—she was so kind and gentle even when she put love away from her—that the man who dared to accuse her of being a coquette would have found himself blackballed even by those who had suffered most for the sake of her blue eyes.

Erroll Courtayne had unconsciously interested her, simply because he had seemed in no haste to worship at her shrine, and she made some little exertion (rare effort for Cecil!) to become acquainted with him. She really began to like him, in her calm way, during their sojourn at Harewood, and was aware of being gratified when she met him, a few weeks later, at hot, dusty, tiresome Saratoga. She was staying at the Clarendon, with quite a large party, including the Merediths and Lechmeres, but had found it somewhat stupid until the day she happened to meet Courtayne, walking down to the springs. And this brings me back to the evening when Courtayne first admitted to himself that his fate had met and conquered him at last—that he loved Cecil Adair.

One of Erroll Courtayne's best gifts was his unerring tact; tact so delicate and trustworthy that it almost resembled the quick

instincts of women, who reason invariably from their hearts, never their heads. He was clever as well as eccentric, and he had no mind to lay his heart's best jewels at Cecil's feet, to be rejected as scores of others had been. So many men had loved her, dare he be presumptuous enough to imagine that he would succeed where they had failed? Most women can be reached through their universal fault, vanity; unassailable here, alas! for Cecil ignored herself and her own loveliness persistently; verily the man who laid siege to that hitherto impregnable fortress had no small task before him. As he sat pondering thus, in a dreamy sort of way, he caught a snatch of the conversation going on in the smoking-room behind him.

"It's all very well, I admit, to say that there's nothing like a charge with the bayonet," said Captain Delmar, in hot dispute with Erricson, a brother officer; "but you could never have carried those rifle-pits in that way. Depend upon it, it was our masked batteries that saved you."

His frank, peculiarly merry smile danced in Courtayne's brown eyes, as he rose and threw his cigar over the railing.

"You have seen too many bayonet charges, my queen," he said, to himself. "I'll borrow a hint from Delmar's theory, and see what masked batteries amount to." And having thus apparently settled the point with himself, he sauntered indoors, and sat down to ecarte with Erricson, which lasted, I am sorry to say, into the "wee sma' hours."

Tina Meredith would never pardon me if she knew that she had not yet received notice in this veritable history, but, being a decided character in her own peculiar line, she deserves a paragraph by herself. It depends upon what light you look at Tina in, whether you like her, or quite the contrary. If you are a man you would rave about her hair—fine as silk and of the lightest brown—think that her babyish pouting red lips, and her wide-opened gray eyes, that smiled one moment and filled with tears the next, were the most lovable orbs you ever looked into. I have no doubt that you would be fascinated with her droll childish mistakes, and her frank (?) way of showing up other women's failings; yes, indeed, sir, you would be just dolt enough for all such blunders. Whereas, a woman in your place would take, possibly, three minutes to discover that the innocent-looking eyes could be wonderfully clever in their own interests, and that the pretty soft

white kitten could scratch sometimes, and scratch venomously. But then, of course, you would accuse me of "feminine jealousy" if I told you all this unglossed truth about pretty Miss Meredith; O dear! what blind bats you men are, where women are concerned. So I will merely add that Tina Meredith, at eighteen, was the most artful little cat I ever had the pleasure of knowing, and that if I were to pick out my most delicate and subtle colors with which to paint her portrait, I never could do her justice.

Tina and her lady-mamma was a finely matched pair; what one did not manoeuvre for the other did, and, between them, they were pretty sure to be successful in any plan that they undertook. Some months previous Mrs. Meredith had quietly hinted to Tina that Erroll Courtayne was "decidedly the best," and they were both very heartily vexed when Ida Lechmere wrote that she "had room but for one more—so sorry! shall expect the Merediths in October." Very often, during the year that Tina had exercised her wiles upon the unsuspecting men of her acquaintance, Cecil had noticed, with secret amusement, the many artifices which her cousin resorted to when she wished to entice Cecil's lovers away; and had smiled her calm, securely indifferent smile as man after man held steadfast to his allegiance to herself. But perhaps the secret of Cecil's amusement lay in the fact that she cared so little for them; would she permit Tina to quietly undermine her in what touched her more nearly?

I think you would go far to find a prettier picture than Tina Meredith, as she sat in her rose-lined basket-phaeton, holding her pink and white reins in her mites of hands, and looking up into Courtayne's face with a childish expression of intense interest, as he endeavored to explain to her the merits of the different horses entered for that day's races. Pretty creature! she had skillfully extracted all the information needful from Mr. Lechmere at breakfast, and had "hedged" her bets with a degree of cleverness calculated to inspire admiration in the oldest *habitué* of the turf; but that did not prevent her from displaying charming ignorance, or from paying flattering attention to every word that fell from Courtayne's lips. Cecil, coming down the piazza with Ida Lechmere and Captain Delmar, had full benefit of the tableau.

"O Cecil! do hurry," called Tina, as they came within speaking distance. "I have

asked Mr. Courtayne to go with me—you don't mind, dear? Your silver-gray dress and cerise trimmings are lovely, but I could not have the conscience to ask you to spoil their effect against these rose-colored cushions. It's so dreadful to be confined to certain colors." And she gave a plaintive sigh, and shook her brown curls solemnly.

"To be sure, green doesn't suit you," said Ida Lechmere, returning the pin thrust with tranquillity, though she knew it was aimed at Cecil, not her matchless self. "I noticed you last evening; never wear that dress again, dear. Cecil, I don't think my phaeton cushions will quarrel with your taste if you like to drive over to the races with me."

Now, be it remembered, that Tina's scratch was repaid with compound interest, for (ambitiously desiring to meet Cecil on her own ground) Tina had rashly ventured to array her pretty person in a pale sea-green dress, at the hop the night before, and had been punished for her temerity by looking almost ghastly, for the first time in her life. And secondly, if there was anything that she envied Mrs. Lechmere, it was her phaeton, with its lapis lazuli lining and liveries, and her beautifully matched roans, now tossing their impatient heads in the sunshine. So she gnashed her teeth mentally at the fair and imperious Ida, but whispered softly to Courtayne, with dewy eyes and a grieved child lip:

"I didn't quarrel with Cecil, but Ida is so very odd! I never could wound the feelings of others as she does." And Courtayne, being shrewd and wise in his generation, did not suffer his secret enjoyment to escape him, but gave her some pretty nothing in reply, over which she smiled as delightedly as a child with a bon-bon.

The somewhat scattered party arrived at the race-course in due time and met on the stand; Cecil and Mrs. Lechmere with a certain distinguished major-general, and his chief of staff, Colonel Creighton, in attendance. But the general, though a superb soldier and matchless tactician in his own proper place, was sadly out of his orbit in the society of the *grandes dames*, and Cecil was conscious of being bored, as he stood talking at her elbow; and she wondered, with a touch of secret vexation, why Courtayne considered it necessary to remain glued to Tina's side, when Delmar and Erricson were also talking with that pretty plotter. And then she scolded herself for the vexation, and pick-

ing up her lorgnette endeavored to take a little interest in the horses as they were being led up and down by their fancifully attired jockeys.

To those of us who have been season after season at the races, there is nothing more stupid than a *rechauffee* of a morning on the grand stand, neither am I enough of an adept in turf language to give you a good description of a race between the far-famed "Kentucky" and a rival favorite, "Wild Rose." On that special day there was nothing very exciting to chronicle, for "Kentucky" fairly walked over the course, and the field was badly beaten. And I should not have taken you out to the races at all, were it not to tell you of a little incident that befell Cecil, and was the first gleam of her awaking from her unconsciousness.

At the conclusion of the races Mrs. Lechmere telegraphed across to Cecil her desire to leave immediately, before the rush, as she knew that her roans were apt to be restless in a crowd. They were sitting near the staircase, and ought to have managed the matter easily, but somehow, through the *gaucherie* of the general aforesaid, they got to the head of the flight just as everybody else in the vicinity started also. Cecil abhorred a crush, so she drew back a step or two, and braced herself against the railing, until, seeing that Ida was half way down, and not wishing to be far enough behind to cause annoyance, she moved forward again. Just as she set her foot on the second step there was a sort of creak—a crash! and the crowd swayed back against the stand as the upper half of the railing broke and fell; fortunately outward. Cecil almost lost her balance, not quite; but Colonel Creighton, who was just behind her, flung his arm around her waist, and lifted her up on the stand again. But for a second she had been in a really perilous position, and she was glad to get into the nearest seat, and shut her eyes for a brief moment, as the noise and panic surged below her. She had not even collected her scattered senses sufficiently to thank Colonel Creighton for his timely aid. (Do not weave a romance or a probable lover out of the colonel; he was a married man with several children, and staid enough to have been president of this glorious land!) She had hardly recovered from her dizziness when some one put a bottle of strong aromatic salts in her hand, and said, his calm low voice having a strange tremor:

"You are not hurt? I have had a horrible fright about you!"

She opened her eyes; Erroll Courtayne was standing beside her, a trifle paler than usual, and looking down at her with an unconcealed thankfulness, that, for some reason, brought the color and bloom back to her lovely face.

"Hurt? no, only a little giddy," she said; and then, somehow, she found herself with her hand in his, thanking him, and—well! I can't tell you what made that amused smile quiver under Colonel Creighton's mustache as he watched them. His turn came an instant after, although he disclaimed the thanks so gracefully spoken with Cecil's loveliest smile; and then Tina was seized with one of her helpless demons, and sent a messenger to beg Courtayne to find her phaeton, and he was obliged to go back to her, and leave Cecil to be escorted down the lower staircase by Delmar and Creighton. Ida Lechmere never gushed, but she possessed herself of Cecil's hands, and uttered several warm thanksgivings because of her escape; and then she dismissed her groom, and told Delmar that he might ride "tiger" for the nonce, and protect them from the roans' restive tricks on the way home.

I have told you that Cecil was very calm and tranquil (in this, as Mr. Grant White says, "non-emotional age," all our heroines, and many of our real personages endeavor to repress all enthusiasm, you know;), but her calmness and tranquillity did not extend much below the surface, and her heart beat high and warm in her bosom as she drove home that morning. Her repose was a species of armor, under which she hid her real fire and depth, and she had acquired it from her dread of Mrs. Meredith and Tina, at first, until now it had grown to be second nature. For Mrs. Meredith could be both stingingly disagreeable and openly violent, a combination which, you must allow, would be trying to the nerves and temper of any one who was dependent upon her, as Cecil was to a certain extent. Not in a pecuniary sense, thank fortune; though no heiress, she had a very nice income which satisfied all her requirements; but she did depend on her aunt for a home, and Mrs. Meredith contrived at times to make that home very bitter to her. Cecil had taken a mental vow that, disagreeable as her surroundings were, she would bear them with patience until that day came when she should find her conquering hero—she had too

fine a sense of honor to marry for an establishment. And Tina almost believed it now, for had not Cecil been *mad* enough to refuse Clifford Vane and Murray Harcourt, this season? One with a rent-roll of fifty thousand, and the other of ninety thousand a year! After such insanity as *that*, Tina washed her hands of her cousin, and was torn with inward rage because she had been unable to bring down either of those golden birds by her charming wiles or babyish innocence.

There was a ball that night at the Clarendon, and Cecil may be pardoned for wondering "what he would think" of her, as she glanced at herself in the mirror of her aunt's parlor. She was a very great beauty—said to be the loveliest that New York had seen for twenty years—and other women paled by contrast with her. She was a fair brunette, with blue eyes—even rarer beauty than the much-admired *blonde aux yeux noirs*. Her hair was purplish black and very luxuriant, worn in soft braids wound around her head like a coronet, and her eyes were deep blue, with long curling lashes that lay lovingly against the fair smooth cheek, where the roses of York and Lancaster blended in a complexion of marvellous beauty. I can give you no adequate description of the enchanting mouth, or its calm sweetness when in repose, because when she smiled her whole face changed and glowed into its fairest loveliness. That night she wore a gauzelike dress of black and white, water-lilies on her bosom and in her hair, and around her slender throat a superb necklace of emeralds, which had been her mother's, with the sparkle of a tiny diamond, like a dewdrop, linking each stone. Tina, looking like a miniature edition of the last Paris fashions, and an exceedingly pretty one, too, could have stabbed Cecil with satisfaction as she surveyed her.

"O you angel! I am reconciled to your jetty locks when I see the effect of those water-lilies. What a pity that they fade!"

"That is a disadvantage," said Cecil, good temperedly. "Tillman disappointed me, and I was forced to supply the missing daisies which should have accompanied this dress by lilies. You have a lovely bouquet, Tina; I have not seen such tuberoses this season."

"Isn't it a love?" said she, triumphantly, as she nestled them against her face, first on one side and then the other, to see which *pose* looked the most natural. "I wonder if Erroll Courtayne is as rich as they say?"

Cecil saw the connection of ideas, but she had not yet fallen from her proud estate sufficiently to begrudge Tina the flowers, even from Courtayne—there was nothing petty about her. So she said, carelessly:

"I never took the pains to inquire; ask Ida," as the door opened, and Mrs. Lechmere entered.

"Have I kept you waiting? Tina, that ravishing dress atones for half a dozen green ones!"

"Thank you!" said Tina, crustily. When there were no men at hand to be upon her guard for, her sweetness sometimes turned wonderfully acid.

Cecil had been in the ballroom for a good half hour before Courtayne made his way to her, and the unusual flutter of her heart was chilled by the cool sparkle of his eye. What change had come over him since the morning? She almost began to think that she had fancied the look which she longed, almost passionately, to call back again. But as she tormented herself in true womanly fashion, she unconsciously bent more and more to him; never had he realized her power of fascination so fully as he did that night.

It was growing late, and the ballroom floor was less crowded when Cecil yielded to Captain Delmar's persuasions for one last waltz. He finished it very cleverly, at the balcony end of the room, and then took her outside, congratulating himself upon securing the beauty for a few moments' *tete-a-tete*. And he growled a mental malediction upon Ericson, who followed them an instant after.

"Delmar—I beg a thousand pardons, Miss Adair—Creighton wants to see this fellow in the smoking-room for five minutes. About your leave, Fred, and as I knew that you were anxious for an extension, I thought it would not do to let the opportunity pass."

With a sigh Delmar resigned himself to his fate.

"Let me take you back?" said he, offering his arm to Cecil.

"If you will not be gone long, it is cooler and pleasanter to wait here," said Cecil; "if you see any *very* agreeable person you may send him out to entertain me." And with a laughing adieu she took a seat directly under one of the ballroom windows.

Now, Cecil had no intention of placing herself in the unenviable position of an eaves-dropper when she rolled that chair almost into the shadow, and most certainly she had no idea that a pair of keen brown eyes in the

window above her saw the movement and recognized her immediately. But what she heard was the end of a sentence, in Ida Lechmere's voice, with a little ring of annoyance in her tone—"mistake her entirely. Cecil always seems colder than she is." Miss Adair raised her hand to put back the curtain and proclaim her vicinity, but Courtayne's answer made her shrink back in her chair.

"Almost the Ice-Maiden," said he, carelessly; "indeed I have no mind to be crushed under the wheels of such a calm conquering Juggernaut."

"Courtayne!" ejaculated indignant Mrs. Lechmere.

"Don't shower exclamation points with dagger tips at me," said he, with a slight laugh. "What did you mean, pray, by counselling matrimony to me a few seconds ago?"

"Pray don't discompose yourself; I never advised you to try to scale inaccessible heights," she returned, with cutting emphasis.

He smiled a little. Fair Mrs. Lechmere was more out of temper with him than she had ever been in her life, for he was one of her favorites.

"I have no right to catechize you," she continued, after a brief pause, "but I confess I am curious to know why you flutter so closely around Tina Meredith."

"She is very lovely," he said, with admirably-feigned warmth.

It was too much for Ida's patience.

"You improve as you grow older, Courtayne! I congratulate you upon your taste and penetration; do you propose sacrificing at that shrine? I don't doubt that Mamma Meredith would be delighted to deck you with triumphant blue ribbons."

"I may give her the opportunity," said he, hotly; "don't think it a sacrifice on my part! Any man might be proud of Tina Meredith."

But as he spoke, acting a lover's warmth skillfully enough, he shot a glance out into the darkness which betrayed him to the clever-witted Ida. Swiftly her look followed his; she saw the fleecy dress, the regal head, with its coronet of lilies, and the trembling crouching figure that strove to hide itself in the shade of the curtains—saw, and recognized Cecil, and felt, with instinctive quickness, that this unaccountable freak of Courtayne's was connected with her, that he *meant* to be overheard! Her sunny smile answered his pretended anger, and the merry malice for which she was famed lurked in her reply.

"Fie! we won't quarrel just yet, *mon ami*, though I never dreamed that you were to be captured by such very light artillery. If it's completely settled I'll go and compliment Tina." Then, in a rapid undertone, as she passed down the room, "Detected! Tell me the motive for all the nonsense you've been treating me to, sir, or I shall feel it my duty to execute some flank movement, and thereby defeat you without merey."

He looked down into the imperious laughing eyes, and read that his secret was suspected by them.

"I ought to have known that you would find me out," he said, with comical resignation, as he placed a chair for her in a secluded corner of the piazza.

Cecil, sitting alone in the darkness, looked after the tall graceful figure of Courtayne, as he took Ida away from the window, with the keenest pain that she had ever known. He had never intended to wound her so deeply, and his kindly heart would have revolted against his new tactics, had he but seen the hot tears that fell slowly from those lovely eyes. Her woman's heart was touched at last, and with a rude shock; Cecil had found her hero only to lose him! When Delmar entered he noticed nothing unusual in Miss Adair's manner, and attributed her rather weary voice to the fatigue of the ball. She refused to dance again, and bade him good-night at the foot of the staircase with a kindness and warmth that, wellbred as he was, very nearly surprised him into showing that he observed it.

Cecil Adair was a very noble girl in more respects than one, and she showed her freedom from all pettiness in the undisturbed sweetness of her manner toward Tina, after that night's revelations. And Tina, for the next week, was enough to have tried the patience of a saint; the pinpricks and insinuations that she devised, and the numberless occasions upon which she contrived to pat Cecil on the back were inconceivable, unless you have seen the same game played. Ida Lechmere's tongue fairly ached to repay the pretty creature's impertinences, and she did manage to make Tina hate her, although, as her promise to Courtayne bound her to loyal silence, she could not sting her as severely as she desired.

Saratoga grew hotter, more dusty and more crowded than ever, it seemed to Cecil, and she found it hard to maintain the same even demeanor toward Courtayne. If she had but

known how her calm persistent friendliness baffled and annoyed him, she was sufficiently like the rest of her sex to have exulted a trifle; as it was, she steered skillfully between the rocks of pique and coldness, and never posed sentiment for him. Mrs. Meredith began to think that no matter how attentive Courtayne was, Tina did not progress rapidly enough, and after revolving many plans in her fertile brain, determined to assist fortune.

Some of the party had agreed to go to Luzerne for two days, and Ida had wasted half an hour's persuasions upon Cecil to coax her to join them. But she was resolute in declining, although she came down at an early hour to see them off.

"At the last moment, wont you go?" asked Ida, coaxingly.

"What a tease," said Cecil, playfully. Then her voice sank wearily. "Don't press me, Ida; my spirits are not quite up to the usual standard."

"You dear solemn owl, what's happened to you lately?" said Tina, with sweet playfulness; "you are not going to settle down—yet!"

Then the women crowded up to kiss Cecil, and the men shook hands with her, Courtayne, perhaps intentionally, coming last. It was silly, foolish, unworthy of her customary self-control, but Cecil knew that her hand shook as she barely touched his.

"Good-by," she said, speaking coldly because she was trembling.

"If we were only going on a picnic in the Harewood grounds," said he, softly. "Do you remember?"

The color flashed up in her face; she gave him the hurt anger he had been longing to see, in her proud reply:

"My memory is excellent, but I remember nothing that Mr. Courtayne has forgotten!"

Had she but looked in his face again she would have seen his scarce-hidden satisfaction at provoking her, but she turned aside immediately, angry at herself for speaking so, and Courtayne carried away with him a picture of the tall queenlike figure, around which the scarlet folds of her cashmere shawl draped itself so faultlessly, and the half-angry half-dewy eyes that had glanced up at his.

No sooner were the party fairly off than Aunt Meredith put her plans into execution by informing Cecil that she intended going back to New York, and from there to Newport. Cecil could not refrain from a surprised exclamation.

"So soon! You mean after Tina's return?"

"No," Mrs. Meredith said, decidedly. "I have not felt well here, and I mean to leave directly. Tina will follow us with the Wortleys; I have already arranged with her."

Cecil understood instantly; she was the obnoxious person to be removed from Tina's path. Inwardly, she stifled a sneer; outwardly, she assented so calmly that Mrs. Meredith thought for half a second that she had made a mistake, and wavered between staying and going. But she was a woman who was always prudent, and another look at the lovely face warned her how dangerous delay might be; so she ordered up her maid, and worked with such energy and despatch that they were off by that evening's train, and at Albany took the boat for New York.

Once back in Thirty-Fourth Street Mrs. Meredith began to feel impatient to move again, but Nemesis awaited her there in the provoking form of a sprained ankle, which she twisted in getting out of her carriage the day after her arrival. Cecil's position was anything but pleasant after that accident; her aunt was excessively irritable, and after the doctor's visit on Sunday she broke forth in one of her rages, and abused her niece to her heart's content. The hot July weather did not add to their comfort, and Cecil dragged herself up stairs that night with a hard pain in her temples, and a longing to run away and indulge in a good cry. But her own private miseries were driven out of her head when she reached her room, by finding her maid Ellen, a bright pretty Irish girl, sitting on the floor, with her apron thrown over her face, sobbing bitterly. Cecil was always kind and considerate to a servant, so she asked, gently, if anything was the matter. The girl sprang up as soon as she heard her mistress's voice.

"Indade, miss, I beg your pardon, but thim thafes of tares took me unbekownst. It's me little orphan niece Rosy, she that's wid Barney O'Flaherty's wife, has the faver, and O mirra! mirra!"

Whenever Ellen was in distress she took refuge in almost unintelligible brogue, and therefore some moments elapsed before Cecil ascertained that Mrs. Meredith's fine-lady maid had kept Ellen running and waiting upon her all the day, and prevented the girl's going to see the sick child. Like all the Irish, where sickness is concerned, Ellen was positive that Rosy was "struck wid death," and refused to be comforted.

"It is too late for you to go out to-night, Ellen," said Cecil, "but you can go early in the morning. I will dress without you, of course."

"Och! thin it's yourself that's an angel!" burst forth Ellen.

Cecil laughed merrily. "Not a helpless one, I hope. Whereabouts is the place? Mrs. O'Flaherty's?"

"Down in Second Avenue, between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets; quite a dacent place, sure, over a bit of a cigar shop," replied Ellen, wiping off her tears, and unbraiding Cecil's beautiful hair.

"If the little girl has not a contagious fever—"

"The doctor called it '*interstifting*,' or some such name," interposed Ellen.

"I will walk down there myself in the morning, and take a basket of fruit and jelly. I need the walk. There! never mind thanking me. Put out the gas; good-night!" But the little incident had done Cecil good, and after one or two low sobs in the starlight she fell asleep.

The next day was, if anything, more sultry than the previous one, and Cecil resolved to go out early in the morning, if she meant to accomplish her errand without discomfort. But her aunt was particularly exacting; it almost seemed as if she knew that Cecil had some plan of her own for spending the morning, and, after the lame ankle had been bathed, she fretfully told Cecil to take the last new novel and read to her. So Cecil read until her throat ached, and her aunt fell asleep; and then, finding that it was lunch time, she concluded to wait for that meal, thinking that, as it was now so warm, she would ride down town instead of walking. After lunch she put on the coolest white suit that she possessed, tied a blue veil over her face, and, taking her basket of delicacies, started out, imagining that she was quiet and unobtrusive looking enough to pass unnoticed, whereas, she only looked a little more stately than usual, and rather like a disguised princess.

She walked over to Madison Avenue, meaning to take a stage, but there was none in sight, so she went on to Twenty-Third Street, and then down to Third Avenue. The streets struck her as looking strangely deserted, but seldom being in town at that season, she thought nothing of it, though she noticed knots of queer rough-looking men clustered on the corners, and finally at Fourteenth Street a great crowd in the middle of

the street, shouting and yelling in anything but an encouraging manner. She stood still for a minute and looked behind her. No car in sight in either direction; it was odd, certainly, but perhaps there was a procession to account for the temporary aberration of the New York working mind; she had come nearly all the way, and might as well finish her mission, so she turned at Fifteenth Street and walked rapidly down to Second Avenue. More knots of men, fortunately below her, near the Cooper Institute; and in a state of heat and some annoyance Cecil found the "dacent house" and the little cigar shop. That, too, looked as if its owner had locked up and gone for a holiday, and after Cecil's second rap Ellen opened the door with a surprised exclamation:

"O me dear young lady, it's never yourself! to-day of all days!"

"I told you that I would come," said Cecil, a little shortly, as she went up the stairs.

"O, then you don't know! Sure, the men has all struck because of the draft and the naggurs, and they say there'll be mournin' in all New York before the week's over. O me dear Miss Cecil, I wish you was safe at home. Bad luck to me that tould you about Rosy at all!"

Cecil stood still for a moment and grew a little pale; a mob was not a pleasant thing to encounter, but, like all New York girls, she was so accustomed to go about alone and be treated with perfect civility, that she could not believe herself in any danger now.

"Nonsense, Ellen. I don't believe a word of it!"

"Then, indade, you may," said the girl, frightened out of her customary respectfulness; "do ye hear *that*?"

A series of frightful cries and shrieks came up the avenue. Ellen locked and bolted the door, and then followed Cecil up into the room where sat a pleasant-faced woman with a baby on her knee, and Rosy in a little cot by the window.

"It's Miss Adair," said Ellen, "and, sure, we must kape her here till thim's past. When'll Barney be home?"

"I'm proud to see you, miss," said Mrs. O'Flaherty, rising, "but it's ill luck that sint the likes of your ladyship here, the day. My man went out for a bit of ile for Rosy, there, an' if you'll wait till he gets back he'll be plased to take you and Ellen home, for I'd not dare have yees try it alone."

Cecil's composure having returned to her,

she thought their alarm much exaggerated, but she thanked Mrs. O'Flaherty, and said she would be much obliged to Barney. And then she threw off her hat, for the room was like an oven, and went over to see Rosy.

"My poor little girl; you look as if grapes would be just the thing," said she, taking the hot wasted hand in hers, and placing the basket on the cot. "Ellen, please make her some lemonade. You will find lemons at the bottom, under the fruit."

Rosy thought she had never seen anything half so lovely as Cecil's face, and after she got over her first awe she chatted away quite briskly as she ate her grapes and sipped the lemonade. Cecil sat patiently for half an hour, though the heat and smell of the small room made her head ache. Outside, the howls and yells appeared more distant and less frequent, and she was about to say that, as it seemed so quiet, she would venture out with Ellen, when the girl herself, who had been watching below, ran up with face as pale as ashes.

"O, thin, here they come, screaming like demons! O mirra! will you look at 'em, tearing!" She pointed to the window, and going to Rosy's cot, Cecil looked out. What she saw was a rabble of men and boys, armed with sticks and paving-stones, hooting and yelling curses, in hot pursuit of a solitary figure, with something in his arms. The fugitive was swift of foot, for he had distanced his pursuers by several yards, and as he came nearer Cecil saw that he wore the well-known gray uniform of that pet regiment—dear to the hearts of all Gotham—the famous Seventh. The man wavered as he came closer, and suddenly sprang into the recess-door of the little cigar shop below. What he carried was a poor little negro boy, of perhaps ten years; the child's clothes were half torn from his body, and blood trickled from his arm as his protector set him down carefully behind him. Cecil could hear the hard panting breath of the runner, and her great blue eyes filled with indignation, as she said, hurriedly:

"Ellen, run down instantly and open that door!"

Ellen wrung her hands helplessly; she appreciated far better than her mistress the dastardly hatred that animated the mob, and she feared turning their wrath upon themselves. To do the girl justice, she was more frightened for her mistress than for herself; but while she hesitated the crowd came nearer with a cry of joy, as they spied their

victims. Suddenly a clear soldierly voice uttered a single word of command:

"Halt!"

There was an uncertain pause of half a second, a pause which the soldier seized to say, in the same clear tones (though something louder) which Cecil had so often heard entreating her for a waltz:

"Wait a moment, my men; I have something to say to you first."

Good God! had she heard aright? was that Erroll Courtayne, to whom she had said an angry good-by a few days ago at Saratoga? The horror of the discovery half dazed her; she could not make sense of the words his voice was uttering; she could only watch with dumb fascination that surging crowd and the stones in those cruel hands. What he said seemed to have temporary effect, and perhaps he might have been successful in drawing their prey away from them, had not an ugly brute chosen to start the fight by throwing a stone, which hit the door in which the fugitives were standing. Before another word could be uttered Cecil was down the stairs; she flung the door open and dragged the little negro inside; a stone grazed her cheek, but she never heeded the pain; her soft white arms clung around his neck, and the blue eyes of the woman he worshipped looked up into Erroll Courtayne's.

Do you think that her beauty would have been potent to save him? Then you may not be aware what fiends those rioters were; had you but seen the cruel hungry faces of that mob of '63, as I saw them, the sight would never die out of your recollection. They were like tigers athirst for blood, and Courtayne groaned aloud in his agony at his inability to save her, when suddenly he heard behind the fierce multitude the sound he had been waiting for—the steady tramp, tramp of a squad of the Seventh Reserve Corps. No place this for Cecil, and he sprang backwards into the house as the first ring of musketry told the mob of their presence.

With a shiver of self-consciousness, Cecil released herself from his arms, as they stood together in the dark hall. What was her boasted calmness and self-possession worth? They had forsaken her in the hour of trial, and she, proud Miss Adair, had gone mad and betrayed herself. Well, she would cover it up as best she could, and with white lips, but steady voice, she said:

"Don't think I was posing for Wallack's. How came you here?"

"Cecil!" He caught her up again, and pressed her against his wildly beating heart with so passionate a gesture that it gave her positive pain. "It is too late for more fencing between you and me! I love you better than my life! that life, for which you perilled your own just now!"

She made no answer; the look that brightened her face like a glory was enough reply.

"My dear, dear young lady!" sobbed Ellen, on the stairs. Then a man's voice said, outside:

"Let me in; sure it's only meself—Barney." Cecil pulled back the bolt, and a big burly Irishman, with a good-humored face, cautiously walked in. He stared at the group as if they were ghosts.

"Barney," said his wife, appearing, "whin thin folks is gone, ye'll show the young lady and gentleman out the back way, wont ye?" The man pulled his hat off civilly enough.

"Dade I will that," said he, "mayhap yees would like me hack; it's a coachee I am—and the boys wouldn't make no disturbance wid me on the box. I belong to the 'Union,' too, but musha, who'd ever hurt a baby like that, though his skin is a dirty black one!"

But it was fully seven o'clock before Court-naye would allow that it was safe to take Cecil home, and long ere that, Ellen and Mrs. O'Flaherty, with genuine Irish courtesy, had shown the pair into the cigar seller's-vacant sitting-room, where Court-naye bathed Cecil's bruised cheek, and petted her to her happy heart's content. He had left Saratoga when he found Cecil gone, and came after her to New York, but had been pressed into service at the Seventh Regiment Armory the night before, where he found his own corps. He had started out to go and see Cecil that morning, but finding a crowd of boys torturing a little black boy, he had interfered with that pastime, and turned their resentment on himself. He had been asked to take command of the squad detailed for Second Avenue, and his real object in parleying with the rioters had been to gain time for the soldiers to arrive.

They found Mrs Meredith in a state of dreadful panic, and very angry with Cecil for her expedition. Cecil said that Mr. Court-naye had escorted her home, and added a brief explanation which made her aunt sink back on her couch. If she had not been enraged at Cecil's capture, she would have fainted away on the spot, just for the sake of being disagreeable. Cecil knew the symptoms, and

made a diversion by suggesting fears of the rioters; so Mrs. Meredith sent for Court-naye, and (as Cecil laughingly declared afterwards) consented to be passively ladylike about a matter in which she had no voice, only as he promised to stay with them until civil law and peace reigned again in New York.

The three days "Reign of Terror" passed happily enough for the lovers; and when Cecil teased Court-naye about his "strategy," and begged to have the theory of "masked batteries" explained to her, he retorted by gravely lamenting that such a disciple of the "non-emotional" school should have so disgraced her code as to be purely natural, for five minutes!

Beautiful Mrs. Lechmere received a long letter by the first train which left New York, going northward, and, sitting on the piazza of the Clarendon, felt that her time had come to annihilate Tina. And pretty, plotting Miss Meredith brought vengeance straightway upon herself by remarking:

"What are you smiling about, Ida? Does your letter contain something pleasant?"

"I think so; perhaps your opinion may differ," said Ida, sweetly. "News for all of us."

"Some miserable man is captured," said Delmar, trying to be witty; "or Mrs. Lechmere would not look so triumphant."

"Don't you dare call him 'miserable,'" said she. "Fate has met Cecil at last. She is going to marry Court-naye." It was a double shot, for Delmar colored scarlet, and Tina turned livid.

"I don't believe it!" she gasped. Mrs. Lechmere's low laugh rang blithely out.

"My dear little skeptic!" and Ida's eyes were demurely malicious. "It's an attested fact, and Cecil says her wedding is fixed for October. I suppose I may tell Court-naye's secret now—he confessed his attachment to me some weeks ago."

Tina was in such a rage she forgot Captain Delmar's proximity, and showed her claws.

"Cecil must have been indebted to you, then, for the knowledge of his sentiments," said she, venomously. "When she left here she was looking forlorn enough, poor thing; she showed her anxiety plainly enough."

Then Ida calmly crushed her.

"I used to give you credit for penetration," said she, with a plaintive voice, in capital imitation of Tina's best efforts in that line; it must be, that in this case 'a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous—blind!'"

And Tina was silenced!